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COSTAS PANAYOTAKIS

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THEATRICAL ELEMENTS IN THE *SATYRICA* OF PETRONIUS

BY

COSTAS PANAYOTAKIS

E.J. BRILL
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PREFACE

The present book is a revised version of my Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the University of Glasgow in August 1993. It is a literary study which deals with the possible influence that Roman comic drama (comedies of Plautus and Terence, theatre of the Greek and Roman mimes, fragments of the *fabula palliata*, *fabula togata*, *fabula Atellana*) may have exerted on the surviving extant fragments of Petronius' novel.

The introductory chapter has two purposes: first, to delineate in a lucid way the theatre of the mimes and its main features, since this theatrical genre is predominant in the world of entertainment in Petronius' time; second, to provide a brief account of both the ancient *testimonia* and modern scholarly works which make fundamental comments on this novel from a theatrical point of view.

Chapters one to seven form the main part of the thesis: I follow the narrative thread of the Petronian novel in its episodic form, and attempt to interpret the events in terms of visual role-playing and the stage. The theatrical 'reading' of this novel can be seen at three levels: the content; the level of style; the level of structure.

At the level of content there is an examination of possible resemblances, which motifs or elements of the novel's plot may bear to the same motifs or elements of plot in surviving (Greek and Roman) theatrical texts.

Under the general category of style the following subdivisions are included:

i. comparison of the novel's characters with theatrical stock-characters;

ii. indication and evaluation of the function of explicit and implicit references in the Petronian text to theatrical genres or to names of theatrical personalities, historical or invented;

iii. similarities between the language of the *Satyrica* and the language of comedy and mime.

The novel's theatrical study at the level of structure denotes the dramatic reading of the novel as if it were the narrative equivalent of a farcical staged piece with the theatrical structure of a play produced before an audience.

These levels of content, style, and structure are applied to the Petronian text following the order of each one of the scenes of the surviving novel: scene in the school of rhetoric (1.1–5.1.1–22); scene in the brothel (6.1–11.4); scene in the market-place (12.1–15.9); scene with the priestess Quartilla (16.1–26.6); scene at Trimalchio's feast (26.7–78.8); scene after the feast (79.1–82.6); scene in the art-gallery (83.1–90.7); scene inside the inn (91.1–99.4); scene on board Lichas' ship (99.5–115.20); scene at Croton (containing legacy-hunting adventures, the hero's love-affair with Circe, his troubles with the witch-like priestesses Proselenos and Oenothea, cannibalism) (116.1–141.11). Such a classification by episode allows a more coherent analysis of each scene separately in the form of a continuous theatrical narrative, and a clearer appreciation of the dramatic qualities of the novel as a whole.

The conclusion draws together the main themes of the thesis, and attempts to explain the strong impact of theatre and its intended function in the *Satyrica.*

A detailed theatrical study of the *Satyrica* is more than a mere enumeration of passages from a genre which influenced Petronius. It can shed light on the dispute over the delivery of the text and gives a clearer picture of how Petronius may have viewed his literary creation. Finally, the farcical features which recur throughout the narrative support the interpretation of this composite text as an eccentric innovation in the area of literature which, through sophisticated means, aimed to amuse without preaching moral lessons.

Abbreviations of the names of ancient authors and of the titles of texts follow the list of *Lidell-Scott-Jones* and the *Oxford Latin Dictionary.* All references to the text of the *Satyrica* come from the edition of K. Müller—W. Ehlers, *Petronius. SATYRICA. Schelmenszenen* (München: 1983)[3]. All translations of Latin and Greek quotations are mine, unless otherwise stated.

*

My three-year research on the theatricality of Petronius' novel at the University of Glasgow has been made possible through the generous funding of the Foundation of State Scholarships ("Ιδρυμα Κρατικῶν Ὑποτροφιῶν) in Athens, Greece, for the academic years 1990–1993. It is to this institution, my supervisor in Greece, Professor Michael Paschalis, and my former teachers at the University of Crete that I must express my gratitude first.

My real debt, however, goes to my supervisor in Glasgow, Professor P.G. Walsh. Without his learned criticism, his moral support, and unfailing encouragement this book would never have been completed. Wise and young at heart, he should be highly praised for enduring my fanciful speculations and pagan interpretations of ancient literature. *Da mihi castitatem et continentiam, sed noli modo.*

I owe no less gratitude to all those who helped me in every way during my adventures with Encolpius. The secretary and the members of staff at the Department of Classics offered me the warmest welcome I could get. Professor D.M. MacDowell and Mr. P.R. Jeffreys-Powell saved me from many an academic embarrassment by teaching me Aristophanic and Plautine comedy, and by showing me the meaning of the words *confido, sed caveo.* Likewise, Mr. M. Brown's lectures on the *Cena Trimalchionis* helped me clarify many points in Petronius' text. I also derived a great benefit from the instructive advice and edifying criticism of the examiners of this work, when it was a Ph.D. Thesis, Mr. Peter George, from the University of St. Andrews, and Mr. Michael Brown, from the University of Glasgow.

My fellow postgraduates kept pestering me with references to new books and articles relevant to my subject, and I am grateful to them for this. Parts of the thesis were delivered at Conferences in Glasgow, Edinburgh, St. Andrews, Oxford, Durham, and Exeter. I gratefully acknowledge helpful suggestions made by the audience on these occasions. I ought not to forget Mr. Julian Deahl, from E.J. Brill, who was always kind and encouraging in our long correspondence. Shorter versions of chapter two, section two, chapter six, section one, and chapter seven, section three have appeared in *Mnemosyne* 47 (1994) and *Classical Quarterly* 44 (1994). I thank the editors of these periodicals for their kind permission to incorporate this material into my book.

Dr. Patricia Woods kindly volunteered to proof-read my thesis. If it was not for her acute criticism, there would be innumerable solecisms and barbarisms in my text. Remaining errors are, of course, mine.

This long list ends with the expression of my deepest gratitude to my family, my twin brother, and the good friends, who stayed by me all the time and never gave me the impression that I was away from home.

This book was completed in the wet Glaswegian autumn of 1994, and does not consider any publications which I could not get hold of by then.

INTRODUCTION

I. *Mimus imitatio vitae*

The word *mimus* in both its meanings of an imitator, actor, and a form of drama was taken over from the Greek into Latin, and a great number of mimic performers came to Italy from Greek-speaking lands.[1] One should not think, however, that Roman mime was a purely Greek phenomenon transplanted to Rome. Greek mime or farcical comedy had flourished in Southern Italy and Sicily for centuries in the short comedies of Epicharmus from Syracuse, the prose mimes of Sophron, the burlesque Phlyaces, and the plays of Rhinthon from Tarentum. With this native Italian mimic tradition the mime from the East was blended, and formed what should be more correctly defined as the Greco-Roman mime.

Before we look at how antiquity defined the mimic drama, it is useful to make a clear distinction between the early pre-literary form of mime, which was brief, crude, and depended mostly on improvisation, and its later development during the late Republic into a form of literature in the hands of Decimus Laberius and Publilius

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[1] Among the numerous studies on the history of Roman mime see A. Nicoll, *Masks, Mimes and Miracles. Studies in the popular theatre* (London / Sydney / Bombay: 1931) 80–134; E. Wüst, "Mimos", in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. G. Wissowa et al., 15.2 (Stuttgart: 1932) 1743–61; G.E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy. A Study in Popular Entertainment* (Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, New Jersey: 1952; Bristol Classical Press: 1994) 13–5; M. Bonaria, *Romani Mimi* (Roma: 1965) 1–17; F. Giancotti, *Mimo e Gnome* (Messina / Firenze: 1967) 13–42; W. Beare, *The Roman Stage* (London: [3]1964) 149–58; G.N. Sandy, "Scaenica Petroniana", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 104 (1974), 343, nn. 33 and 34; R. Rieks, "Mimus und Atellanae", in *Das römische Drama*, ed. E. Lefèvre (Darmstadt: 1978) 348–51 and 361–77 (with bibliography); J.C. McKeown, "Augustan elegy and mime", *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 25 (1979), 71–84; N. Horsfall, "The Literary Mime", in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature—II Latin Literature*, ed. E.J. Kenney (Cambridge Univ. Press: 1982) 293–4; P.E. Kehoe, "The Adultery mime reconsidered", in *Classical texts and their traditions. Studies in Honor of C.R. Trahman*, ed. D.F. Bright and E.S. Ramage (Chico, California: 1984) 89–106; F. Dupont, *L'acteur-roi ou le théâtre dans la Rome antique* (Les Belles Lettres, Paris: 1985) 296–306; R.E. Fantham, "Mime: the missing link in Roman literary history", *Classical World* 82 (1988), 153–63; R.C. Beacham, *The Roman theatre and its audience* (London: 1991) 129–39. My brief account of the characteristics of the mimic genre owes much to these studies.

Syrus. In both its forms it never lost its character of popular entertainment and from the Empire onwards it remained the predominant form of comedy. The most detailed definition of the mime is that of Diomedes, who wrote in the fourth century A.D. (*Art. Gramm. Lib. III*, p. 491 Kiel):

> *Mimus est sermonis cuius libet imitatio et motus sine reverentia, vel factorum et dictorum turpium cum lascivia imitatio; a Graecis ita definitus,* μῖμός ἐστιν μίμησις βίου τά τε συγκεχωρημένα καὶ ἀσυγχώρητα περιέχων. *mimus dictus* παρὰ τὸ μιμεῖσθαι, *quasi solus imitetur, cum et alia poemata idem faciant; sed solus quasi privilegio quodam quod fuit commune possedit: similiter atque is qui versum facit dictus* ποιητής, *cum et artifices, cum aeque quid faciant, non dicantur poetae.*
>
> The mimic drama is an imitation of any kind of speech and irreverent movement, or the lascivious imitation of shameful deeds and words; it is thus defined by the Greeks: 'mime is an imitation of life containing both licit and illicit subjects.' The word 'mime' comes from the word 'imitate' as if it were the only literary form which used imitation, although other forms of literature do the same thing; it alone, however, appropriated this shared quality as its prerogative; likewise he who makes verses is called a poet, whereas artists, although they also make something, are not called poets.

Diomedes' definition is not a successful one since it virtually limits the mime to the imitation of words and deeds considered obscene by the grammarian. The importance of dance, songs, music in the mimic drama, its religious connections, its secular character are not mentioned. It has been suggested that the authorship of the Greek definition of the mime belongs to Theophrastus. Yet other scholarly opinions differ in this matter. The proposed date, though not a definite one, for the Greek definition is the period from 300 B.C. to the beginning of the Roman Empire. What is important to keep in mind from the Greek citation is that all aspects of everyday life, and not heroic or divine subjects, is what a mime imitates.[2]

A description of the mimes which is perhaps dependent upon the definition of Diomedes, but which lacks its hostility, is that of Isidore of Seville, writing in the seventh century (*Orig.* 18.49):

> *DE MIMIS. Mimi sunt dicti Graeca appellatione quod rerum humanarum sint imitatores; nam habebant suum auctorem, qui antequam mimum agerent, fabulam pronuntiare[n]t. Nam fabulae ita componebantur a poetis ut aptissimae essent motui corporis.*

[2] A detailed discussion of the passage should be consulted in Giancotti 1967, 26–8.

ON MIMES. They are called mimes in Greek because they are imitators of human affairs; for they used to have their own composer who announced in advance the plot before the performance of the play. The plots were composed by poets in such a way as to be most appropriate to the movement of the body.

The imperfect tenses (*habebant*, *componebantur*) show that Isidore is describing mimic performances of some previous age. From this description we see that mimic productions were not always the rudely improvised and unfinished affairs of the days of Cicero, who, in his *Pro Cael.* 65, discusses the story put forward by Clodia and tries to show that not only is it mere fiction but that it has no real conclusion:

Mimi ergo iam exitus, non fabulae; in quo cum clausula non invenitur, fugit aliquis e manibus, dein scabilla concrepant, aulaeum tollitur.
Therefore, its conclusion is not like that of an ordinary play; it is like the conclusion of a mime, in which, when no end can be found, the actor escapes from the hands of the others; the clappers give the signal, and the curtain rises.

The mimes to which Isidore refers had both prologue and plot, and were composed by poets. This does not necessarily exclude variations of mimic plays in which the prologue did not exist and the plot or intrigue was elementary. We are fortunate enough to possess the prologue which was recited by the famous mimic playwright Decimus Laberius himself when he was an old man and a knight, and was forced by Julius Caesar to compete with a much younger mimic actor and playwright, Publilius from Syria.[3] In this prologue, which, however, constitutes an exceptional occasion, there is no reference to the *fabula* which, according to Isidore, the speaker should narrate in advance. Perhaps the exposition of the plot followed the surviving text. However, it seems that the mimic actor himself chose what means of self-expression he should stress in his performance: recitation, dance, gesticulations, song. Isidore's reference to *motus corporis* shows the importance of gestures and dancing in the mimes.

Both definitions of the mime thus far considered stress the fact that mime imitates ordinary life. This aspect of mimic theatre inevitably brings one to the famous subject of mimic realism. It is often assumed that mime with its imitation of base things and worthless

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[3] Laber., 139–70 (Bonaria). See the lengthy discussion of the lines in Giancotti 1967, 167–216.

characters[4] was preeminently the genre of realism in antiquity. Mimes which present mythological subjects, although they appear in the late Empire, certainly constitute an exception to the rule.[5] Even in the plays, whose titles suggest the treatment of a topic of everyday-life, we cannot be certain that the acting, the gestures, the facial expressions did not ridicule the whole theme and transform it into an exaggerated caricature.[6] In this case, it seems to me that it is better to refer to a parody or burlesque, rather than an imitation, of ordinary low situations by the mimes.

Does this imitation or burlesque have any particular message to convey to its audience? According to Aristotle, tragedy imitates people as better than they are for the purpose of arousing high emotions in the minds of an audience (*Poet.* 1454b15). Comedy imitates people as worse than they are for the purpose of making ridiculous certain errors or vices (*Poet.* 1449a5). As far as we know, a mime aimed only at making its audience burst out laughing without having any moral attitude towards life.[7] This laughter (*mimicus risus*) was characterized by Quintilian (6.3.8) as *res levis, et quae a scurris, mimis, insipientibus denique saepe moveatur* 'a light thing, aroused generally by buffoons, mimes, and brainless characters'.

Apart from a possible prologue, there were two main ingredients of a mimic play: the *deverbia* or spoken parts and the *cantica* or singing parts. The spoken parts are composed in what is defined as *sermo plebeius*, ordinary language of low-class people.[8] Metres which occur

[4] Evanth., *exc. de com.* 4.1, p. 21 (Wessner): *mimos ab diuturna imitatione vilium rerum ac levium personarum*; 6.2, p. 26 (Wessner): *planipedia autem dicta ob humilitatem argumenti eius ac vilitatem actorum, . . .*

[5] On the controversial subject of mythological burlesque in the mimes (detailed analysis of relevant evidence and earlier bibliography) see Kehoe, *Studies in the Roman Mime* (diss.) (University of Cincinnati: 1969) 46–77. Cf. ch. one, n. 57.

[6] On mimic caricature see G.M.A. Richter, "Grotesques and the Mime", *American Journal of Archaeology* 17 (1913), 149–56; J.-P. Cèbe, *La caricature et la parodie dans le monde romain antique des origines a Juvénal* (Paris: 1966) 39–40, 45.

[7] J. Lydus, *De Magistr.* 1.40: μιμικὴ ἡ νῦν δῆθεν μόνη σῳζομένη, τεχνικὸν μὲν ἔχουσα οὐδέν, ἀλόγῳ μόνον τὸ πλῆθος ἐπάγουσα γέλωτι; cf. Choricius, *Apol. Mimorum* 30: ἐπεὶ δὲ ὅλον παιδιά τις ἐστι τὸ χρῆμα, τὸ πέρας αὐτοῖς εἰς ᾠδήν τινα καὶ γέλωτα λήγει. πάντα γὰρ εἰς ἀναψυχὴν μεμηχάνηται καὶ 'ραστῴνην.

[8] See G. Bonfante, "La lingua delle Atellane e dei Mimi", *Maia* 19 (1967), 3–21; A. Traglia, "Sulla lingua dei frammenti delle *Atellane* e dei *mimi*", in *Studi Classici in onore di Quintino Cataudella* III, ed. C. Nicolosi et al. (Univ. di Catania: 1972) 7–20; B. Boyce, *The language of the freedmen in Petronius' Cena Trimalchionis* (Leiden: 1991) 8–9, 13–4.

in the fragments of literary mimes by Laberius and Syrus are iambic senarii and trochaic septenarii.

In spite of the confusion of ancient grammarians in their attempts to define or describe mime and comedy,[9] it is essential to determine those characteristics of the former which effectively distinguish it from the latter.[10] The first of these is obvious from the word *mimus* itself, which indicates that the mimic performances probably emphasized imitations to a greater degree than any form of comedy did. Cicero (*De Orat.* 2.242) urges future orators to avoid excessive mimicry,

> for, if the imitation is exaggerated, it becomes a characteristic of mimic actors who portrayed characters, as also does obscenity. An orator must perform imitations without being noticed so that his audience may imagine more than it witnesses with its eyes; he must also present the nobility of his character and his modesty by avoiding shamefulness of language and indecency of gestures.

And later on he adds with contempt (*De Orat.* 2.251):

> This also must be taken into account, that not everything, which is laughable, is witty. For, what can be as laughable as a buffoon? Yet it is because of his face, his grimaces, [his imitation of mannerisms,] his tone of voice, his own body, in fact, that he is laughed at. I may call him funny, and such, not as I would like an orator to be, but as a mimic actor.

Quintilian, following faithfully Cicero's doctrine, corroborates this notion (6.3.29):

> It hardly becomes an orator to distort his facial expression and his gestures, things which are generally laughed at in mimic plays.

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[9] In addition to the intentional endeavours of Diomedes and Isidore to give a description or definition of the mimic drama, there are some references in which the mime seems to be linked with comedy. The emperor Marcus Aurelius (11.6.2) views the farcical mime not as a variety of comedy but as its successor (especially, as the successor of New Comedy). In the fourth century, mime is considered by Evanthius (*exc. de com.* 4.1) as a form of comedy together with *fabula togata, palliata, Atellana*, and others. Choricius of Gaza was a sophist who wrote in the sixth century A.D. defending the theatre of the mimes and stressing the benefits for its audience. Reversing the formula of Donatus he regarded *comedy* as a form of mime, and that he did quite naturally, since mime had virtually driven comedy off the stage many centuries before his time. See Kehoe 1969, 6–8.

[10] According to Cicero (*De Orat.* 2.251–2) the characteristics of mimic wit were the following four: ridicule of human figures who exhibit particular vices, emphasis on mimicry, exaggerated facial expressions, and obscenity.

The second important characteristic was that the mimic actors seem usually not to have used masks in their performances.[11] A third feature peculiar to the mimic stage was the employment of women for female roles.[12] Yet another important feature of the mimic performances was their very heterogeneity. The great variety of performances that were called mimes in antiquity is probably the reason that the ancients found it so difficult to define the mime. The mimic performers are often named alongside jugglers and magicians and the mime itself seems to have derived from this circus milieu. Throughout its history the mime always retained the fundamentally popular character of circus entertainment. Its opportunistic nature sought amusement in any available topic, and was not afraid to ridicule anything or anybody, identifying itself on many occasions with the masses and earning the contempt of the upper class and learned people, although exceptions to this rule were not rare.[13] There is also an extraordinary variety in the style of the plays. In some mimes we find scenes of sadistic crudity and vulgar obscenity, and in others sophisticated apophthegms of highly moral standards.[14]

The head of a mimic troupe was called *archimimus* (or *archimima*, when a woman was in charge) or *magister mimariorum*. He owns the company, directs the plays and takes a part, sometimes, though not always, the chief role. There seems to have been a hierarchy in the division of parts:[15] the *archimimus* (or *—mima*) dominates the scene. Then there are the *actores secundarum partium*, *tertiarum*, *quartarum*, etc. The reference to secondary parts does not necessarily imply that these parts were of a lesser or inferior importance. The *actor secundarum* played the part of the *stupidus*, mimic fool (his equivalent in the Greek

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[11] To my knowledge, only Nicoll 1931, 91 is sceptical about this assumption: 'There is not . . . a single statement made by an earlier writer which stamps the whole mime drama as maskless; it seems probable that some parts at least required the use of exaggerated and comic masks.' This is the case, I believe, in Tertullian's account of the mythological mimes (*Apolog.* 15.3): *Imago dei vestri ignominiosum caput et famosum vestit* 'The image of your god covers the head of a shameless and infamous person'.

[12] See Nicoll 1931, 92–9.

[13] See Kehoe 1969, 168–73; McKeown 1979, 71–2.

[14] Mimes imitate both decent and indecent scenes: see Chor., *Apol. Mimorum* 88: ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ μίμησις ὑπάρχει τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα, ἑκατέρας δὲ ἰδέας μετέχει—νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὐ σεμνὰ σχηματίζονται, νῦν δὲ πάσης αἰσχύνης ἀπηλλαγμένα; P.G. Walsh, *The Roman Novel. The "Satyricon" of Petronius and the "Metamorphoses" of Apuleius* (Cambridge Univ. Press: 1970) 25.

[15] See Nicoll 1931, 85–90.

mime is the μωρὸς φαλακρός, the bald-headed fool), or the parasite. Horace (*Ep.* 1.18.10–4) criticizes a contemporary and says that he repeats the words of others and catches the phrases as they fall, as a schoolboy repeats the words dictated to him by a stern master, or a mime in secondary parts repeats what has gone before. There is the character of the old hag whose regular name seems to have been *carissa*; old, ugly, irritable, bibulous, and wanton, she tries to retain her past beauty with plenty of make-up. There is the flatterer, the slave, the adulterer, the jealous husband, the jealous woman, the mother-in-law, the foolish scholar. In his sixth century description of mimic characters Choricius (*Apol. Mim.* 110) lists:

> . . . δεσπότην, οἰκέτας, καπήλους, ἀλλαντοπώλας, ὀψοποιούς, ἑστιάτορα, δαιτυμόνας, συμβόλαια γράφοντας, παιδάριον ψελλιζόμενον, νεανίσκον ἐρῶντα, θυμούμενον ἕτερον, ἄλλον τῷ θυμουμένῳ πραΰνοντα τὴν ὀργήν.
> . . . the master, the household slaves, the inn-keepers, the sausage-sellers, the cook, the host and his guests, the notaries, the lisping child, the young lover, the angry rival, and the man who attempts to soothe another man's anger.

One can find evidence for more mimic characters in the surviving titles of mimic plays: Laberius' *Augur* 'The Soothsayer', *Piscator* 'The Fisherman', *Hetaera* 'The Courtesan', *Restio* 'The Rope-dealer', show that we deal with common human characters. In this sense we can say that in mime there are no stock characters who star in different comic situations every time, as they were, for example, in Atellan farces where we have four types (*Bucco*, *Maccus*, *Pappus*, and *Dossennus* or *Manducus*) enacting funny plots.

The mimic repertoire included realistic subjects from everyday-life (*adulteria* 'adulteries', *nuptiae* 'mock-marriages', *naufragia* 'staged shipwrecks', *mortes* 'false deaths', *fallaciae* 'cunning schemes', *veneficia* 'poison-intrigues')[16] presented in a grotesque manner.[17] Political satire and literary parody, philosophical burlesque and mythological travesties were not alien to the genre. In spite of the hostile contempt of men of letters, the farcical mime managed to remain popular through the

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[16] Evidence for these topics will be given throughout the book when a connection between the mimes and the *Satyrica* will be made through a characteristic which both of them share.

[17] This does not imply that mimic plots presented inconsistencies; see Quint., 4.2.53: *Est autem quidam et ductus rei credibilis, qualis in comoediis etiam et in mimis. Aliqua enim naturaliter secuntur et cohaerent, ut si bene priora narraveris iudex ipse quod postea sis narraturus expectet.*

ages and, by Petronius' time, virtually to drive almost all other forms of comedy off the stage: mimes featured in the festival of the *Iuvenalia* (Tac., *Hist.* 3.62.2); Nero himself performed in pantomimes and favoured tragic roles, while there is evidence for the survival of Atellan farces still at this period (Suet., *Nero* 39.3); the reference to a performance of a *fabula togata* by Afranius (Suet., *Nero* 11.2) should not be considered as evidence for the revival of the genre. It was inevitable that the pre-eminence of the mime in Nero's Rome of spectacles[18] should have had a clear impact on the author of the *Satyricon Libri*.

II. *Fere totus mundus ex Arbitri nostri sententia mimum videtur implere*

The *Satyrica* or *Satyricon Libri*, nowadays regarded conventionally as a kind of novel, was written probably between 63 and 66 A.D. perhaps by Titus Petronius Niger, a man who led a most extraordinary way of life, if he was the same Petronius as the one described by Tacitus (*Ann.* 16.18–19) as being appointed *Elegantiae Arbiter* in Nero's court, after Seneca had ceased to be the emperor's favourite in his literary coterie.[19] What has survived from the original is no more than fragments probably from books fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen. We do not know how much more there was.[20] Similarly, we can only speculate on the way it was delivered to some of Petronius' contemporaries.[21]

[18] Nero's artistic interests have been extensively discussed: see M.P. Charlesworth, "Nero: some aspects", *Journal of Roman Studies* 40 (1950), 69–71; Sandy 1974, 342, n. 28; J.P. Sullivan, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nero* (Ithaca and London: 1985) 27–31; Sullivan, "Petronius' *Satyricon* and its Neronian Context", in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.32.3 (Berlin—New York: 1985) 1676, n. 17; (especially) P.L. Schmidt, "Nero und das Theater", in *Theater und Gesellschaft im Imperium Romanum*, ed. J. Blänsdorf (Tübingen: 1990) 149–63.

[19] A scholarly *consensus* seems to have emerged concerning the identification of Petronius the courtier with Petronius the author of this novel, a view supported by K.F.C. Rose, *The Date and Author of the Satyricon* (Leiden: 1971). A recent brief account of the dispute can be found in Sullivan 1985(b), 1666–8. I concur with the general view that T. Petronius Niger was the person responsible for both the evaluation of cultural and aesthetic matters in Nero's court, and the creation of Encolpius' fictional adventures. We shall see that this identification will explain a great deal of the theatrical aspect of the *Satyrica*, a comic narration composed in accordance with the artistic side of Neronian Rome.

[20] See Sullivan, *The Satyricon of Petronius. A Literary Study* (London: 1968) 34–8; H. Van Thiel, *Petron. Überlieferung und Rekonstruktion* (Leiden: 1971) 21–4.

[21] The question of the oral performance of the *Satyrica* in episodes, addressed only to trustworthy courtiers in Nero's reign, remains still open, since N.W. Slater, *Reading Petronius* (Baltimore / London: 1990) 11–4 (with earlier bibliography) argued strongly for reading as the primary medium of the novel's delivery. Against such a

There are two main theories which have been formed to answer the vital question of the novel's purpose: one supports the notion that it was composed as literary entertainment and the other favours the more serious interpretation of moral preaching.[22] For many the question remains still open.

The surviving *Satyrica* tells the adventures of Encolpius and his occasional companions, Giton, Ascyltus, and Eumolpus, around Italy, and should be regarded as a sophisticated synthesis of many different literary genres, including oratory, historiography, epic, elegy, satire, Greek romance, and drama.[23] The outcome of this combination is a work of art unique in many aspects in the field of surviving literature.

That the element of theatricality is a dominant feature in the *Satyrica* is hardly an original observation. As far as we can judge from our surviving ancient *testimonia* on this novel,[24] the first person who noticed the close similarity between Petronius' literary composition and the sub-literary mimic theatre, was the Christian apologist of the late fourth and early fifth century, Marius Mercator. Attacking on religious grounds the pagan emperor Julian, Marius refers to the obscenity of Julian's language in his writings and ranks him among the well-known mimographers, Philistion, Lentulus, and Marullus.[25] It is then that, strangely enough, he mentions the epigrammatist Valerius

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view see, recently, G. Schmeling, "The *Satyricon*: The Sense of an Ending", *Rheinisches Museum* 134 (1991), 375. On the importance of *recitatio* as a means for the author to test the quality of his work before publication, in what could be termed theatrically as a 'dress-rehearsal' of the text's performance in front of a live, and critical, audience, see E. Lefèvre, "Die römische Literatur zwischen Mündlichkeit and Schriftlichkeit", in *Strukturen der Mündlichkeit in der römischen Literatur*, ed. G. Vogt-Spira (Tübingen: 1990) 9–15; T. Woodman & J. Powell, *Author and Audience in Latin Literature* (Cambridge Univ. Press: 1992) 204–15.

22 See Schmeling, "Petronius: Satirist, Moralist, Epicurean, Artist", *Classical Bulletin* 45 (1969), 49–50, 64; Sullivan, "Petronius: Artist or Moralist?", in *Essays on Classical Literature*, selected from *ARION* with an introduction by Niall Rudd (Cambridge / New York: 1972) 71–88; Walsh, "Was Petronius a moralist?", *Greece & Rome* 21 (1974), 182–9.

23 The seminal study is A. Collignon, *Étude sur Pétrone. La Critique littéraire, l' imitation et la parodie dans le Satiricon* (Paris: 1892). See, also, Sullivan 1968(a), 81–98; Walsh 1970, 7–30.

24 See K. Müller, *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon* (München: 1961) liv–lvi; Sullivan 1968(a), 111–4.

25 For a brief account of the life and works of Lentulus and Marullus (first or second century A.D.) see Bonaria 1965, 136–7. On Philistion (perhaps first century A.D.) see Wüst, "Philistion", in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. G. Wissowa et al., 19.2 (Stuttgart: 1938) 2402–5; Kehoe 1969, 146–59.

Martialis and the novelist Petronius Arbiter as additional examples of the gross obscenity of the mimic theatre with which the emperor's licentious language is compared:

> *Erubesce, infelicissime, in tanta linguae scurrilis, vel potius mimicae obscenitate. Vulgares tu dignus audire acclamationes: Unus tu, unus Philistion, unus Latinorum Lentulus, unus tibi Marullus comparandus; namque Martialis et Petronii solus ingenia superasti.*[26]
> You should feel shame, you most wretched man, for such obscenity of your buffoonish—or, to put it better, mimic—language. You deserve to hear the cheering of the plebs: You, and you alone, can be compared with a Philistion, a Lentulus of the Romans, a Marullus; for only you have surpassed the mind of Martial and Petronius.

A little later Marius uses metaphorically the image of theatre to show the degree of lasciviousness that characterizes the works of Petronius and Martial, and then to state in hyperbole that Julian surpassed even these two authors in immorality:

> *Eleganter scurra loqueris more tuo, et more quo theatrum Arbitri Valeriique detristi. Constat in illis prosatoribus generis humani fuisse libidinem insitam eorum naturae, quam quidem divinae Scripturae, non ut tu vis, libidinem solent, sed carnis concupiscentiam nominare, . . .*[27]
> Your speech is elegant, you buffoon, after your usual manner and the manner in which you wore away the theatrical performances of the Arbiter and of Valerius. It is generally known that in the case of these writers the lust of human kind, which the Holy Scriptures usually name not as lust, as you seek, but as concupiscence of the flesh, has been implanted in their nature.

By Marius', and, in fact, by Petronius', time the mimes had prevailed over all other forms of staged theatrical entertainment;[28] it is reasonable, therefore, to assume that by the vague word *theatrum* Marius was referring specifically to the particular mimic genre. It is not easy, however, to conclude from the context of Marius' tirade whether he had in mind other characteristics of the farcical mime, apart from its obscenity, when he was making the connection between the mimic theatre and Petronius' novel: for example, the fact that the *Satyrica* can be read theatrically as if it were the narrative equivalent of a

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[26] M. Mercator, *Lib. Subnot. in Verba Juliani* 4.1 = Migne, *P.L.* 48, 126–7. See Sullivan 1968(a), 112–3.

[27] M. Mercator in Migne, *P.L.* 48, 133–4.

[28] On the evidence for what was actually performed at Pompeii around Petronius' time see Horsfall, "'The uses of literacy' and the *Cena Trimalchionis*", *Greece & Rome* 36 (1989), 194 and 206, n. 4.

farcical stage-piece with the dramatic structure of a play produced before an audience.

From a similar point of view John of Salisbury, writing in the twelfth century, comes closer to the essence of Petronius' novel in his condemnations of the people who over-indulge in theatrical performances (*Pol.* 3.8). According to him, comedy portrays the life of man on earth and life itself becomes a play where each person forgets his or her real self and plays the part of another person. John's contemporaries, like Petronius' contemporaries, are excessively preoccupied with the stage-arts and this obsession will lead eventually to the damnation of their souls; for living constantly in self-deception will result in the inability to return at will to their true selves. The same thing happens to children—John continues his argument—who, after having imitated for a long time the way lisping people talk, find that they can no longer speak properly when they want to. John compares the sinful world of his age with the world as he thinks Petronius intended to represent it: *fere totus mundus ex Arbitri nostri sententia mimum videtur implere* 'In the view of our Arbiter, almost the whole world seems to perform a mime.' He will repeat the same idea later on, revealing another aspect of the novel's theatricality, the element of role-playing as a recurrent pattern in the behaviour of the novel's characters and action (*Pol.* 3.8): *fere totus mundus, juxta Petronium, exerceat histrionem* 'According to Petronius, almost all the world plays the actor'.

Although a clearly moralistic tone is adopted for the motives which John believes made Petronius choose to use a theatrical substratum for the representation of the world in his novel, it is remarkable that mime and its connection with the Petronian novel have been selected again for the allegorical comparison between sin and theatre. We know that John of Salisbury had a personal copy of the *Satyrica*, more or less as it has come down to us.[29] His assessments will be justified by the dramatic analysis of each scene of the surviving *Satyrica*.

It has become almost a τόπος among modern scholars to accept the presence of theatricality in the novel we are studying, but there

[29] See J.M. Martin, "Summary of the 1968 Ph.D. Thesis *John of Salisbury and the Classics*", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 73 (1969), 319–20: "John's citations from the *Satyricon* of Petronius go back to three of the four traditions in which the work was circulating in his day, . . . John's extraordinary knowledge of the *Satyricon* and his genuine appreciation of the narrative and characters were unequaled before the 17th cent."

is considerable disagreement about the degree and the function of this element in the author's artistic intentions for his novel. A brief reference to the most important studies of the theatrical aspects of the *Satyrica* will show the necessity for a fresh evaluation of the whole question.

The first major contribution to the study of the influence theatre, and, especially, mime, might have exercised on Petronius' novel was made by Collignon in what constitutes the beginning of serious Petronian studies. Collignon gathered passages from theatrical texts which exhibit verbal or thematic similarities with the Petronian text and argued that 'il y a cependant de sérieuses raisons de croire que Pétrone a bien connu le mime populaire et en a utilisé pour son roman et les intrigues et le style.'[30] Nevertheless, he regards the theatre of the mimes and, to a much lesser degree, the *fabulae palliatae*, *fabulae togatae*, and the theatre of Plautus and Terence,[31] as only one of numerous possible formative genres which influenced the novel's content.

A more detailed analysis of the mime's impact on the *Satyrica* was attempted in the dissertation by Rosenblüth where it also forms part of a comparative study of the Petronian text and Varro's Menippean satires, Theophrastus' *Characters*, and Apuleius' novel. The author diligently, and sometimes exaggeratedly, classifies material from our novel which shows a close similarity to the subject-matter, specific technical aspects, and the language of the mimic theatre. Although this study forms an invaluable source of scholarly information, the author makes the basic mistake of taking for granted, before even starting his analysis, that 'Petrons schriftstellerische Absicht war die Darstellung der Sitten seiner Zeit, und zwar ohne jede moralische Tendenz.'[32] Thus he ignores the novel's mimic atmosphere of pretence and caricature which distorts the realistic image of characters and events, and creates a theatrical façade of pseudo-naturalism. In Petronius' case such preconceptions, which are often misconceptions,

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[30] Collignon 1892, 275.

[31] Collignon 1892, 282: "La collocation de Pétrone avec les fragments de *togatae* réunis par Ribbeck ne permet de signaler que d' assez vagues rapports de situations et d' expressions... Aussi rares sont les rapprochements qu' on peut établir entre Pétrone et les auteurs de *palliatae*. Il ne semble pas que le romancier se soit inspiré directement des comédies de Plaute et de Terence.... (p. 283) Si Pétrone a fait des emprunts au théâtre latin, et on est autorisé à le supposer, ce sont les mimes surtout qu' il a dû mettre à contribution."

[32] M. Rosenblüth, *Beiträge zur Quellenkunde von Petrons Satiren* (Berlin: 1909) 9.

lead, as we shall see, to the misinterpretation of most of the text. It is surprising that in his final chapter Rosenblüth does not give priority to the mimic influence but defines the novel as 'Erfüllung der Form der Menippischen Satire mit dem Geiste des Mimus.'[33]

Rosenblüth's dissertation should be read together with another which was written six years later and which attempted to demonstrate that Rosenblüth was wrong in his evaluation of Petronius and the mimes. Moering notes that since only fragments exist from the mimes which do not allow us to form a complete picture of this genre, one has to conclude that '*Petronius non mimographorum sed eorum, quos supra commemoravi* (i.e. Vergil, Lucan, Horace, Ovid, Seneca, Lucilius, Homer, etc.), *et multorum aliorum scripta memoria repetiverit, ubi et in illis et in Petronii saturis inveniuntur.*'[34] Moering is, of course, right in his scepticism of the mimic theatre as a primary and sole source of material for Petronius' novel but he disregards the possibility that, although Petronius sometimes took material for his novel from non-theatrical texts, he used it in a ridiculous way which approached the grotesqueness of the mimes. Moering's mistake is due to the same preconceptions which Rosenblüth has about the *Satyrica*:

> *Immo hoc enim interest inter mimum et Petronii saturas. Nam licet et mimi et Petronii saturae res de vita media sumpserint, mimus, vera dum imitatur, in ridiculum convertit efficitque, ut homines, condiciones, status extra modum veritatemque prodeant, cum Petronius facete ea, quae vita cotidiana docet, verissime depingat et exprimat.*[35]

Finally, after examining the validity of Rosenblüth's arguments, and refuting them one by one, he unexpectedly reaches the same conclusion as his opponent:

> *De toto genere saturarum si quaerimus, quaenam in Petronii saturis elementa mimica sint, meo iudicio nihil afferre possumus, nisi narrationem iocosi generis, quae eadem mimica ratione vitam cotidianam descripsit, qua mimus eandem vitam in scaena agit. Atque hactenus cedo ei, qui dicit Petronii libros esse saturas Menippeas indole mimica completas.*[36]

A useful and often underestimated article on the same subject was published in the same year as Moering's dissertation.[37] Preston is

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[33] Rosenblüth 1909, 61.
[34] F. Moering, *De Petronio mimorum imitatore* (Monasterii: 1915) 8.
[35] Moering 1915, 9.
[36] Moering 1915, 37.
[37] K. Preston, "Some sources of comic effect in Petronius", *Classical Philology* 10 (1915), 260–9.

particularly valuable in gathering adequate pieces of evidence to show that Old and, especially, New Comedy, at least in so far as it is represented by Plautus and Terence, should not be left out of the list of theatrical genres which might have worked as sources of inspiration for Petronius' imagination. Rightly, in my opinion, attention should be drawn to the influence on Petronius not only of the mime but also of theatrical performances in general. Throughout this book it will be demonstrated how the author of the novel does not confine himself to mimic techniques as his sole source of laughter, but experiments also with conventions of Plautine farce or, broadly speaking, with methods common to all kinds of comedy, from Aristophanic slapstick and the humorous indecencies of Atellan farce to role-playing in New Comedy and the organisation of games in Roman amphitheatres.

After Preston's article, a series of lesser contributions to the specific subject has augmented the Petronian bibliography, among which Sandy deserves special mention for 'sweeping up around the edges, concentrating on a few selected portions of the *Satyricon* where there is still scope for original proposals.'[38] A large gap in the study of the novel's theatrical dimension was covered recently by Slater. In *Reading Petronius* the author attempts a reading of the surviving portions of the novel through the American model of reader-response theory and gives special emphasis to the dramatic perspective of the narrative.[39] Moreover, he is the first person who, to my knowledge, suggests that certain passages in the text imply solitary reading rather than an oral reading of the novel through its public recitation. Sandy's, Slater's, and other scholars' contributions are discussed in the following chapters where there is a scene-by-scene theatrical reading of the whole novel.

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[38] Sandy 1974, 329. See his n. 1 for a handy compilation of the most important bibliography dealing with the connection between Petronius and the mimes.

[39] See, however, R. Beck's review of Slater's book in *Phoenix* 46 (1992), 72: "In his initial, linear reading Slater highlights those sections where the characters most obviously and explicitly lapse into mime, but there is no synoptic treatment of it as popular artistic form in his second, genre-oriented reading. There should be, for the form is organic to the work."

CHAPTER ONE

THE ADVENTURES AT THE SCHOOL OF RHETORIC AND AT THE BROTHEL

I. *Tamquam scholastici: Sat. 1.1–5.1.1–22*

The purpose of this section is to examine such indications in the opening scene of the *Satyrica* as show that what is presented as a serious conversation on the educational defects of the author's era,[1] is in fact a hypocritical performance by two rogues who sought, by making pompous statements clothed in grave academic clichés, to satisfy not their mental hunger but their physical one. The theatricality of the scene can be demonstrated by means of the conventionally theatrical *personae* which the main characters adopt, their role-playing in the speeches they perform, and the exploitation of the subject in question as a typical source of entertainment in staged productions.

The usual number of actors in brief mimic plays was three.[2] So in this episode the *Dramatis Personae* are three: Encolpius, Ascyltus, Agamemnon. All of them appear to be 'on stage', when the fragmentary scene begins; Ascyltus will sneak out sometime during Agamemnon's speech (6.1; 9.10). The setting represents the colonnade of a school of rhetoric (*SCAENA porticu scholae*).

The opening scene of the surviving sections of the novel depicts someone, who turns out to be the narrator Encolpius (3.1), in the

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[1] General information and a bibliographical list on education in Rome are in G. Kennedy, "Encolpius and Agamemnon in Petronius", *American Journal of Philology* 99 (1978), 171–2 and n. 3 (p. 171).

[2] See Walsh 1970, 26. This, however, is not true in later, more elaborate mimic productions. In the Χαρίτιον-mime [see B.P. Grenfell—A.S. Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, III (London: 1903) 44–7, 50–5; D.L. Page, *Greek Literary Papyri*, I (London and Cambridge, Mass.: 1942) 336–49], which is dated probably to the second century A.D., there are seven speaking parts, and at some time on stage we have, together with the principal characters, a number of attendants, barbarian guards, and Amazons; see Nicoll 1931, 85–6. These remarks are valid also for the Christian mimes (on which see H. Reich, *Der Mimus. Ein litterar-entwickelungsgeschichtlicher Versuch* (Berlin: 1903) 80–8; Nicoll 1931, 121–2) or for individual plays of a later date, such as the *Laureolus*-mime, on which see ch. six, n. 43.

colonnade of a rhetorical school (3.1), declaiming vehemently against the educational system of his time[3] which makes complete fools of the young men because of the impractical and unrealistic lessons it teaches them before they make their way into the *forum* as speakers (1.3); Encolpius, the amateur-declaimer, cannot resist the temptation, for his own reasons, to expand his reproach against teachers (2.2) and their preference for the Asianic style (2.7).[4] The perennial controversies about educational systems incline one to conceive these passages as edifying instructions to improve, or even put an end to, the faults of teaching in the first century A.D.[5] The twofold question to be asked here, raising what has been a constant dispute in Petronian studies, is whether one should perceive Encolpius' ideas as sincere or hypocritical, and whether one should identify in this particular scene Encolpius the narrator with Petronius the author, a similar dilemma to that in the famous *apologia* of 132.15. Both of these problems can be solved, I believe, by a theatrical interpretation of the scene.

Petronius' own views on the issue are not obvious, but are implicitly expressed through the contrast between the speaker's character and the nature of his speech.[6] Parody of similar criticisms by emi-

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[3] A comprehensive brief account of the development of rhetoric in Rome during the first century A.D. is in P. Soverini, "Il problema delle teorie retoriche e poetiche di Petronio", in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.32.3, ed. W. Haase (Berlin—New York: 1985) 1707–10 (extant bibliography on the topic on p. 1707, n. 3).

[4] Kennedy 1978, 177, n. 19 and B.W. Sinclair, "Encolpius and Asianism (*Satyricon* 2.7)", in *Classical Texts and their traditions. Studies in Honour of C.R. Trahman*, ed. D.F. Bright and E.S. Ramage (Chico, California: 1984) 231–2 and n. 4, 5, give handy summaries of the two opposite scholarly views concerning whether or not Encolpius' comment reflects Petronius' position on the issue of Atticism and Asianism; cf. Soverini 1985, 1713–23.

[5] See W. Kißel, "Petrons Kritik der Rhetorik (*Sat.* 1–5)", *Rheinisches Museum* 121 (1978), 311 and n. 3 for bibliography on the subject.

[6] Sinclair 1984, 237: "[Petronius] places Encolpius' speech against a recognizable literary backdrop, so to provide a level of entertainment which goes well beneath its surface.... [The] purpose is probably humour, in particular that which stems from the incongruity between the character of Encolpius and the manner in which on this occasion he has chosen to present himself: he parrots Cicero but is in effect a sort of absurd anti-Cicero, a *vir perditus dicendi peritus* whose eloquence serves no higher goal than the sating of his appetite. He drastically overplays his part. Thus like the declaimers whom he criticizes (1.2) he too is temporarily *in alium orbem terrarum delatus*—a distant and unreal world occupied not by pirates, tyrants and pestilence (1.3) but by Demosthenes, Hyperides and pestilential Asianism." Cf. Kennedy 1978, 176; G. Anderson, *Eros Sophistes. Ancient Novelists at Play* (Chico: 1982) 100.

nent rhetoricians is certainly not out of the question,[7] but it is his sophisticated humour, rather than his desire to castigate a vice in the serious manner of the Roman satirists,[8] that made him stage a farcical scene with pretentious pseudo-intellectuals declaiming (3.1) against declamations in the fashionable setting of a rhetorical school.

The hypocritical role-playing of Encolpius can be seen not only in his unscrupulous exploitation of edifying theories for mean purposes, but also in the hackneyed character and anachronistic values of the educational rigmarole that Petronius deliberately forces upon the novel's hero. Encolpius' intentions are revealed unquestionably through Ascyltus' reproaches: the hope of getting an invitation to dinner, not an urgent need to deal with learned subjects, had made him stay and prolong his conversation with Agamemnon: '*multo me turpior es tu hercule, qui ut foris cenares poetam laudasti.*' '"By Hercules, you are far more shameless than I am, praising a poet to invite you out to dinner".' (10.2).

Wandering around in order to find a victim who would provide a free meal, the two companions reached the school of rhetoric where Encolpius spotted his man in the person of Agamemnon, who perhaps had been delivering a speech; he aroused the teacher's interest in him by expressing his ideas openly in the colonnade of the school.[9] From then on both he and Ascyltus have been posing as scholars (*tamquam scholastici*) (10.6)[10] and they have managed to acquire what

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[7] According to Sinclair 1984, 234–6 the sources of Encolpius' tirade are two: Dion. of Hal., *De Orat. Vet.* 1.6.7 and Cicero (Sinclair finds similarities between *Sat.* 2.7 and *Brut.* 8; 51).

[8] Such an interpretation is given by G. Highet, "Petronius the Moralist", in *The Classical Papers of Gilbert Highet*, ed. R.J. Ball (Columbia Univ. Press, NY: 1983) 195, who believes that Petronius attributes speeches with serious purpose to 'funny characters because satire is σπουδαιογελοῖον, and its essence is *ridentem dicere verum*, . . .'. But Petronius is not writing pure Roman satire. Sullivan, "Satire and realism in Petronius", in *Critical Essays on Roman Literature—Satire*, ed. J.P. Sullivan (London: 1963) 82 believes that the disreputable characters of Encolpius and Agamemnon do not undermine the validity of the literary opinions expressed here for two reasons: 'the consistency of these views . . . and the fact that we have none but disreputable sources anyway for the serious criticism which we have postulated as part of Petronius' purpose in writing the work'. Similarly, M. Coffey, *Roman Satire* (London—New York: 1976) 192 speculates that 'Petronius may have enjoyed teasing his readers by putting sound views into the mouth of a rogue and a time-server.'

[9] On the reconstruction of these events see P. Cosci, "Per una ricostruzione della scena iniziale del *Satyricon*", *Materiali e Discussioni per l' analisi dei testi classici* 1 (1978), 201–4; Soverini 1985, 1728–30.

[10] See Kennedy 1978, 175: "*Scholasticus* is in fact the word regularly used by the elder Seneca to refer to those people who thronged to declamations as though to

they wanted (26.8–10), although only after a considerable time. This is the first time that the modern reader of the fragmentary novel witnesses Encolpius' amazing ability to adapt his *persona* to the style of the person with whom he is dealing, and to project an image which will allow him to take advantage of the situation. The changes in his behaviour must be visualized in terms of the skilful role-playing of a pantomime-actor who changed roles during his performance.[11] Here Encolpius becomes a professional flatterer, a figure popular in comedy and mimes,[12] praising Agamemnon, another flatterer, who—as we shall see—lives parasitically by affixing himself to rich victims of Trimalchio's type.

The content of the conversation itself is no more than a fruitless repetition of a dispute which belongs to the past and has no real strength at Petronius' time. After questioning the actual existence of Asianism in the time of Petronius' novel, Sinclair rightly concludes that

> the effect of assuming that Petronius was prepared to take such a position is to saddle him with a critical principle which was risibly out of date and would have pointed ultimately to his own ignorance. It makes far better sense to acknowledge that 2.7 belongs solely to Encolpius, that for his local purposes the author is impersonating his narrator without identifying with what he says.[13]

All this is quite clear in the light of the following events, but even without going beyond Encolpius' speech, one will find that in his carefully improvised and highly declamatory tirade (1.1–2.9) the recurrent mingling of rhetorical examples with images of food (*mellitos verborum globulos et omnia dicta factaque quasi papavere et sesamo sparsa* 'honey-sweet little balls of phrases and all words and deeds as if they were sprinkled with poppy-seed and sesame' (1.3); *omnia quasi eodem cibo*

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athletic events, but who were not themselves students and not necessarily teachers. They are the declamation-buffs, the aficionados, for the most part enthusiastic amateurs."

[11] See F. Jones, "Realism in Petronius", *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel* 4 (1991), 113.

[12] Cf. Men., *Kolax*, and the Roman versions of the theme by Plautus and Naevius (Ter., *Eun.* 25); also, the conversation between Artotrogus, the flattering parasite, and Pyrgopolynices, the soldier, in Pl., *Mil.* 1–78, and Gnatho's monologue in Ter., *Eun.* 248–64. For the existence of this character in the mimes see Sen., *Nat. Quaest.* 4A. Praef. 12.

[13] Sinclair 1984, 233. Cf. P. George, "Style and character in the *Satyricon*", *Arion* 5 (1966), 358, n. 10: 'The much publicized opinion that Petronius is an atticist...

pasta 'as if everything was fed on the same diet' (2.8)) and the comparison of students of rhetoric with people who live in the kitchen (2.1), expose implicitly the motive hidden in Encolpius' mind.

Moreover, one can imagine the theatrical gestures and facial expressions which Encolpius performed when he was imitating the speech of the declaimers who are presented as figures tormented by the Furies (*alio genere furiarum declamatores inquietantur*) (1.1). Rhetoricians were fond of gesticulations and changes in the tone of their voice; both these elements were taken over from the histrionic repertoire, and aimed at the creation of an impressing and convincing image a rhetorician should present in front of his audience.[14] Cicero and Quintilian condemn the excessive exploitation of such means and give lengthy accounts of what means of expression a good speaker should avoid and what he should use in his speech.[15] In his imitation of declaimers who appear possessed when they are speaking, Encolpius certainly would not have missed the opportunity to elaborate on similar kinds of theatrical mannerisms. Like an actor on stage who is chased by the avenging Furies,[16] he must have raised the volume of his voice (*clamant*) (1.1), changed his tone from an ordinary to a tragic one, made gestures showing the imaginary wounds that he earned in his struggle for the people's freedom, and pretended to have weak knees which cannot support the rest of his body.[17]

The theatricality of this episode through the role-playing of its characters becomes more apparent in the ensuing speech of Agamemnon (3.1–5.1.1–22), the teacher whom Encolpius was addressing all this time. The *persona* of the bad orator was a common feature in the later mime[18] and perhaps even in earlier times as an aspect of

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is contradicted by the narrative of the rest of the work.'; Kennedy 1978, 177: 'Later in the *Satyricon* (68), however, Encolpius claims to be a great lover of Virgil. If so, his passion for pure Greek is a pose. More likely, both statements are pose.'

[14] Cf. Quint., 3.11.1 ff.; 11.1.39; 11.3.75–8, 80–1, 85, 88–9, 123, 125, 184; and M.L. Clarke, *Rhetoric at Rome. A Historical Survey* (London: 1953) 85–6, 88–9.

[15] See Cic., *De Orat.* 3.220; *Brut.* 203; Quint. 11.3.57, 181–2.

[16] Vergil (*Aen.* 4.471–3) says that Dido was tormented like *Agamemnonius scaenis agitatus Orestes, / armatam facibus matrem et serpentibus atris / cum fugit ultricesque sedent in limine Dirae.* See A.S. Pease, *Publi Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quartus* (Darmstadt: 1967) ad loc., and Cosci 1978, 205–6.

[17] See *Sat.* 1.1: "*haec* vulnera pro libertate publica excepi, *hunc* oculum pro vobis impendi; date mihi [ducem] qui me ducat ad liberos meos, nam *succisi* poplites membra *non* sustinent". The words in italics show the possible points in his speech where Encolpius would have used dramatic gestures to emphasize his imaginary sufferings.

[18] Chor., *Apol. Mim.* 26: ἰατρὸν ἢ ῥήτορα . . . ἢ μοιχὸν ἢ δεσπότην ἢ δοῦλον;

the character of the school-master figure.[19] It is also suggested that 'the risible *scholasticus* in a collection of mimic jokes of late classical antiquity going under the name *Philogelos*, sometimes attributed to Philistion, may depend on a tradition of rhetorical theory being ridiculed on the mimic stage.'[20] As we shall see, Agamemnon's hypocritical behaviour, according to which he performs none of the things he preaches, is strikingly similar to the attitude of a character Βουλίας, in Sophron 109, 'who, in making a speech ('ρητορεύων), οὐδὲν ἀκόλουθον αὑτῷ λέγει.'[21] Thus, there is a strong case for putting in the same mimic tradition Petronius' rhetorician.

Almost twice as lengthy in his answer as Encolpius was in his 'learned' discourse,[22] the teacher of rhetoric with the Homeric name[23] seems impressed by Encolpius' style (*sermonem habes non publici saporis* 'Your speech has an uncommon flavour') (3.1),[24] though, apparently, annoyed that folk have been listening to someone else, rather than himself, speaking for so long and so rhetorically (3.1). He regards Encolpius as someone worthy of sharing with him the mystery of his art (*arte secreta*) (3.1) and seeks to refute one by one Encolpius' argu-

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109: ἔνι καὶ στρατιώτας ἰδεῖν καὶ 'ρητόρων ἀκοῦσαι. On rhetoricians performing in mimic plays at public fairs see Choric., *Apol. Mim.* 95: ἡδεῖα δὲ καὶ πλήρης ἁβρότητος ἡ πανήγυρις αὕτη. ἀφικνεῖται γὰρ ἅπασα τῆς πόλεως ἡ σκηνή, παραγίνονται δὲ καὶ 'ρήτορες ἄνδρες τὰ μίμων ὑποκρινόμενοι οὐ φαύλως βεβιωκότες οὐδ' εὐγλωττίᾳ λειπόμενοι τῶν ὁμοτέχνων. Cf. W. Headlam—A.D. Knox, *Herodas. The Mimes and Fragments* (Cambridge Univ. Press: 1922) xl.

[19] On the figure of the school-master see Headlam-Knox 1922, xli–xliii and xlii, n. 2.

[20] Sandy 1974, 339, n. 21, referring to Reich 1903, 458–75. Sandy notes, also, that the 'incongruous juxtaposition of *jocosus* and *pilicrepus* with *scolasticus* in *CIL* 6.9797 may point to a tradition of a 'type-cast' clownish scholar.' Cf. Trimalchio's 'intellectual' discussions at 55.4–56.6. An English translation of the jokes concerning the stupidity of the *scholasticus* is in B. Baldwin, *The Philogelos or Laughter-Lover* (Amsterdam: 1983) 1–20, 48–9 and 50.

[21] I.C. Cunningham, *Herodas: Mimiambi* (Oxford: 1971) 81; cf. Rosenblüth 1909, 54.

[22] George 1966, 351 underlines Petronius' characteristic multilevelled irony through the mutual parody of the rhetorical style which the two speakers practise upon each other.

[23] Slater 1990(b), 32 comments, rather over-confidently: "Though it should scarcely need stating, we are not to imagine that he and his assistant Menelaus were born with these names. There is a touch of pathos in the adoption of role here: a small-town teacher of rhetoric and his assistant recasting themselves as the sons of Atreus, heroes of the Trojan War."

[24] The same admiration is expressed by Chrysis at Encolpius / Polyaenus' *schema* (126.8–9). Kennedy 1978, 176 implausibly suggests that Agamemnon has taken a fancy to Encolpius.

ments evoking, in a banal manner, Cicero's authoritative ideas (3.2).[25] The comparison Agamemnon makes between the master of oratory (*eloquentiae magister*) (3.4) and the fictional figures of the flatterers who are after the rich man's dinners, and say everything to gain his favour (3.3), discloses his self-confessed hypocrisy and classifies him as the stock theatrical figure of the parasite[26] (*sicut ficti adulatores*) (3.3).[27] Such a character occurs frequently in the Roman comedies,[28] sometimes delivering a brief monologue in which he justifies in a comic manner his profession (Ergasilus in *Capt.* 69–90; Saturio in *Per.* 53–61; Gelasimus in *Sti.* 155–233; Gnatho in *Eun.* 248–64) and explains how he achieves his aim; there is a similarity here to Agamemnon's use of the image of the fisherman with the bait to account for his methods (cf. Peniculus in *Men.* 77–95). He skilfully absolves the teachers of Encolpius' accusation and eloquently puts the blame on the students' parents who have many ambitions for their children's future, but want those ambitions realised immediately (4.1–3).

Opportunities for comic situations derived from school-life incidents are appropriately exploited by Aristophanes, *Clouds*:

> Socrates and his students are pale from their indoor life (103, 119 f., 198 f., 1112, 1171), and Chairephon in particular is 'half dead' (504). They are unkempt and dirty (836 f.), they wear no sandals (103, 362), their premises and furniture are verminous (694 ff., cf. 144 ff.), and since they do nothing which the man in the street (or the field) regards as work (316, 334) it is not surprising that they are poor (175) and rely for a living on stealing other people's clothes (179, 497, 856 ff.). Anyone who enrols in the school must be prepared (414 ff.) to endure cold and hunger, and to abstain from wine and athletic exercise.[29]

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[25] Cic., *Pro Cael.* 41 (referring to the Stoics): *illud unum derectum iter ad laudem cum labore qui probaverunt, prope soli iam in scholis sunt relicti.* See R.G. Austin, *M. Tulli Ciceronis Pro M. Caelio Oratio* (Oxford: 1960) ad loc.

[26] So Rosenblüth 1909, 55.

[27] On *ficti* as a technical theatrical term see Ovid, *Rem. Am.* 755 (*illic* (i.e. *in theatro*) *adsidue ficti saltantur amantes*), and cf. *Th.L.L.* s.v. *fingo*, I.C.3 (*de arte histrionis*).

[28] A list of parasites in Plautus and Terence would include: Parasitus (*Asin.*, *Bacch.*), Ergasilus (*Capt.*), Curculio (*Curc.*), Peniculus (*Men.*), Artotrogus (*Mil.*), Saturio (*Per.*), Gelasimus (*Sti.*), Gnatho (*Eun.*), Phormio (*Phorm.*). On parasites employed as theatrical figures by Greek and Roman Comedy see H.G. Nesselrath, *Lukians Parasitendialog. Untersuchungen und Kommentar* (Berlin / NY: 1985) 15–53; 65–70; 92–111. This character was usually played in mimes by the *actor secundarum partium.* On the type of the *mimus edax* see G. Brugnoli, "Mimi edaces", in *Spettacoli conviviali dall' antichità classica alle corti Italiane del '400. Atti del VII Convegno di Studio*, ed. F. Doglio et al. (Viterbo: 27–30 Maggio 1982) 87–8.

[29] K.J. Dover, *Aristophanes. Clouds* (Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1968, repr. 1990) xxxiii–xxxiv.

Similarly, the scene of Herodas' Third Mime might be a school, although not necessarily one of rhetoric.[30] In this mime, Λαμπρίσκος, the rigid teacher, uses fruitless methods (chastisement) to improve his pupil's foul character (but note that, despite his seemingly honest promises at lines 82–3 and 86, Κότταλος manages to escape at line 93, shouting a swear-word), while Μητροτίμα, the mother of the young student Κότταλος, has the same demands for her son's education as the parents whom Agamemnon accuses as the cause of the educational decline (4.1–2).

As in comedies where educational methods of past and present are juxtaposed to provide a comic effect,[31] so Petronius employs the same contrast and ridicules it, since he puts it in the mouth of hypocrites like Encolpius (2.3–4) or Agamemnon (4.3–4). The solution to the educational problem, according to Agamemnon, lies in a programme of life where severity (4.3; 5.1.1) and frugality (5.1.3) dominate, precisely the two things which Agamemnon does not practise.[32] In his following improvisational *carmen* (5.1),[33] he unveils his own tactics in the person of those he accuses: he is a frequent *cliens* at Trimalchio's dinners (*Agamemnon mihi carissime*) (48.7) and an expert in knowing how to get an invitation (48.5; 52.7) / *cliensque cenas impotentium captet* (5.1.5). He prefers to underestimate the quality of his own intellect by praising Trimalchio's intellectual pretensions (48.7) and accepting all his peculiar whims (47.7) / *nec perditis addictus obruat vino* \ *mentis calorem* (5.1.6–7). Finally, he applauds Trimalchio's taste-

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[30] Cf. Cunningham 1971, 103.

[31] See Lydus' complaints in Pl., *Bacch.* 420–46 and the comic treatment of educational dilemmas in Ter., *Ad.*; cf. J. Barsby, *Plautus. Bacchides* (Aris & Phillips: 1986) 133–4; R.L. Hunter, *The New Comedy of Greece and Rome* (Cambridge Univ. Press: 1985) 96–7.

[32] George, "Petronius and Lucan *De Bello Civili*", *Classical Quarterly* 24 (1974), 132–3 compares the two literary critics of the novel, Agamemnon and Eumolpus: "Both are professed admirers of the *bona mens* (*Sat.* 3.1; 84.4); both undertake the edification of Encolpius; both offer pastiche among their accomplishments; both are extremely conservative in their attitudes; both are incompetent hypocrites, who fail to practise what they preach so badly. One does not expect from them a serious critique of literature or education, any more than one would expect a profound religious experience at the hands of Quartilla, or a true model of the high Roman fashion in Trimalchio's *triclinium*."

[33] P. Cugusi, "Nota Petroniana (*Sat.* 93.2, v. 4)", *Rivista di Cultura Classica e Medioevale* 9 (1967), 86 speculates that even the diversity of metres in Agamemnon's composition is evidence that 'Petronio voglia rendere un' idea della vacua pretesa abilità di retore di Agamemnone: ci si troverebbe perciò di fronte ad una felice caratterizzazione del personaggio.'

less histrionics and spectacular effects (40.1) / *neve plausor in scaenam* \ *sedeat redemptus histrionis ad rictus* (5.1.7–8).

A theatrical analysis of the scene indicates that Petronius was merely playing with conventional situations and stock figures, and should in no way be identified with Encolpius' *persona* in this particular incident. Both Encolpius and Agamemnon are hilarious caricatures of serious men of letters who care for the betterment of young students. Their role-playing, a recurrent motif and a constant feature in the characters of the other persons in the rest of the novel, defines this scene as a farce, not of action, but of words, where the mimic juxtaposition between illusion and reality, another favourite Petronian pattern, underlines the theatricality of the novel and creates an enjoyable atmosphere of fun and entertainment without drawing any serious psychological conclusion on the characters' personalities.[34]

II. *Rixa inter zelotypos et amasiunculos: Sat. 6.1–11.4*

Encolpius, pretending to be a scholar (*scholasticus*) interested in the decline of rhetoric, has succeeded in getting what he really wanted from Agamemnon: an invitation to dinner (cf. 10.2; 10.6; 26.9–10). The hypocrisy of his behaviour regarding the subject of rhetoric and education is shown clearly when the young amateur-rhetor grasps the opportunity and leaves the place of 'the broken bottles and the interpretation of dreams' (*vitrea fracta et somniorum interpretamenta*) (10.1) and merges with a great crowd of students (*ingens turba scholasticorum*) which makes fun of the improvised declamation (*extemporali declamatione*) of another ambitious rhetor (6.1).

The passages of the novel from Encolpius' departure up to the scene in the market-place, despite the lacunose condition of the text,[35]

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[34] C.W. Wooten, "Petronius, the mime, and rhetorical education", *Helios* 3 (1976), 70–1, is misleading: "The characters in the *Satyricon* are intelligent and well-read; but they are immature, naive and shallow. From their education they have gotten an impression that life is romantic, dramatic, and exciting. When they leave school, they find that life, for most men, is mundane and dull (*alium orbem terrarum*); however, their education has turned them into romantic dreamers who cannot accept life as it is. They begin to long for the romance, the drama, and the adventure which they have seen in the lives of those fictional, or sometimes historical, characters about whom they have read. They attempt, therefore, to imitate the characters of literature, constantly casting around for literary parallels to their own lives, which destroys everything in their own personalities which is natural and spontaneous."

[35] See Van Thiel 1971, 27–9.

can be divided into two main episodes: the scene in the brothel (6.1–8.4) and the rivalry (*aemulatio*) of Encolpius and Ascyltus for Giton's love (9.1–11.4), a rivalry which will reach its climax at 79.12 ff., where Giton will have to choose between his two suitors. The theatrical aspect of these events can be seen in the role-playing of the characters and the sexual 'comedy of manners' they perform, generated by Encolpius' excessive jealousy in his relationship with his lover Giton and his rival Ascyltus. The triangular pattern of the *Dramatis Personae* in both parts of the scene, is apparent once more: Encolpius / Ascyltus / old woman, and Encolpius / Ascyltus / Giton.

The brothel-scene is a topic for discussion by scholars mainly because it offers one of the best written descriptions of a Roman brothel.[36] This scene, however, does not provide a realistic description of a low-life incident, but is composed in order to present an amusingly obscene spectacle in a brothel where indecent innuendos are skilfully combined with highly sophisticated references to literary texts in Petronius' usual mimic manner. The constant juxtaposition of the sordid world, in which the characters move, and the theatrical fantasy, in which they actually live, makes it plain that the author did not intend a photographic representation of a specific social stratum of his era, but rather used that stratum as the starting-point for his narrative and as the means through which he would create his own theatrical world.

It is generally assumed that the homosexual liaison between Encolpius and Giton, and the threatening appearances of rivals who take a fancy to either of the couple, are due to Petronius' deliberate parody of the ideal Greek romance where the beautiful and chaste hero and heroine encounter lustful strangers who intend to sunder the lovers.[37] Marital unfaithfulness, however, occurs as a standard motif also on the comic stage where it creates funny situations through the husband's attempts to conceal his peccadillo and the wife's investigations to reveal it.[38] Adultery on the woman's part became more

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[36] See F. Henriques, *Prostitution and Society. A Survey* (London: 1962) 124 ff. for a description of Roman brothels, with reference to this passage on p. 126.

[37] See R. Heinze, "Petron und der griechische Roman", *Hermes* 34 (1899), 495–7; Walsh 1970, 8–9 and n. 4.

[38] See, for example, the couples of Demaenetus and Artemona (Pl., *Asin.* 878–937), Lysidamus and Cleustrata (*Cas.* 937–1008), Menaechmus I and Matrona (*Men.* 110–22). On the literary history of the motif of jealousy within a sexual context (among others there is a discussion of the theme in Old and New Comedy, Greek

popular as a topic for performance by the uninhibited theatre of the mimes, and here the humour emerges from the cunning schemes which the wife devises in order to hide her lover and fool her jealous husband (see chapter five, section two). Both of these situations (that is, jealousy and adultery) will be exploited for comic effects by Petronius through Encolpius' love-affair with the hypocrite Giton (79.9–80.8; 91.1–92.4; 100.1–2), and through Trimalchio's marital problems (74.8–17) later on in the novel. The first instance in the surviving text of Encolpius' jealous character, which leads him into trouble, is found here: by underscoring constantly sexual jealousy as a primary feature in Encolpius' nature, Petronius transforms his hero into the typecast figure of the *zelotypus*, as we know it from Herodas' Fifth Mime or the Oxyrhynchus mime of 'The Faithless Wife' or Juvenal's graphic reference to the part.[39] The assumption of this role by the narrator defines the expectations and forms the reaction that the audience of the novel ought to have to the pathetic description of such events: the author implicitly instructs them to regard the sexual escapades of Giton and Ascyltus at the expense of poor Encolpius as nothing more than pure entertainment.

Following the theatrical plot we see that Encolpius seems to be anxious when he notices Ascyltus' sudden departure. We do not learn the cause of this anxiety, although it is likely that he is afraid of a love-conspiracy between his two companions behind his back. Here the element of role-playing, as evidenced in the scene at the school of rhetoric, continues: Encolpius follows Ascyltus hurriedly (*cursim*) (6.2) but loses his way, walks round in circles and always comes back to the same point from where he started (6.4).[40] Totally exhausted and sweating, he asks an old woman for information about his

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and Roman mimes) see R.E. Fantham, "Ζηλοτυπία: a brief excursion into sex, violence, and literary history", *Phoenix* 40 (1986), 45–57; cf. Hunter 1985, 91–2.

[39] So Preston 1915, 265–6. For the character of the jealous husband in farce see Juv., 8.196–7 (*mortem sic quisquam exhorruit, ut sit / zelotypus Thymeles, stupidi collega Corinthi?*) and J.E.B. Mayor, *Thirteen Satires of Juvenal with a Commentary* (London—NY: 1881) ad loc. For the text of the Oxyrhynchus-mime see Grenfell—Hunt 1903, 49–50; Page 1942, 352–60.

[40] On the labyrinthine structure of the scene see P. Fedeli, "Il tema del labirinto nel *Satyricon* di Petronio", *Materiali e contributi per la storia della narrativa greco-latina* 3 (1981), 169; Fedeli, "Petronio: il viaggio, il labirinto", *Materiali e Discussioni per l' analisi dei testi classici* 6 (1981), 110. F.W. Zeitlin, "Petronius as Paradox: Anarchy and Artistic Integrity", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 102 (1971), 656 interprets wrongly this recurrent pattern of Encolpius losing his way as a device used 'to heighten the senseless drift of experience.'

lodgings (7.1) in the way that Aeneas inquired of his mother Venus when he reached Carthage.[41] It is important to note that this choice of persons—or, rather, roles—is not accidental but forms the result of Encolpius' initiative to portray his present desperate situation as if he were playing a heroic role.[42] Thus, not only does he become Aeneas, a role that will be adopted many times later on in the novel by the hero, but the old woman (*anicula*) becomes the divine Aphrodite (7.2).

However, in Petronius' mimic subversion of the Vergilian scene, Aeneas' mother is nothing but a clever bawd who has not necessarily read her *Aeneid* but certainly knows how to take advantage of a man's disorientation and lead him not where he lives but where he should live: in a brothel (*'hic' inquit 'debes habitare'*) (7.2).[43] Possible satirical influences on the old woman's personality should not be disregarded[44] but the method in which a bawd has turned into a divine Roman mother while Encolpius, lost in a disreputable area, has become a wandering hero, supports the case for the possible impact the mimes may have had on the formation of this scene, especially since Vergil's poem seems to have been a standard source of material for stage-productions of this kind.[45]

The brothel itself, described as an obscure quarter (*locum secretiorem*) (7.2) and a perverted place (*loco tam deformi*) (7.5), does not lack theatrical references. There is a *fabula Atellana* by Pomponius under the title *Prostibulum* and many other comic fragments dealing with prostitutes.[46]

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[41] *Aen.* 1.330 ff. See Walsh 1970, 87; Slater 1990(b), 33, n. 1.

[42] Collignon 1892, 118–31 has collected the relevant instances of such Vergilian role-playing.

[43] On the old-woman's scurrilous improvisations see P.B. Corbett, *Petronius* (NY: 1970) 98–9; Slater 1990(b), 33, n. 1.

[44] On invective against old women in satire see A. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: sexuality and aggression in Roman humor* (Yale University Press: 1983) 109–16; H.M. Currie, "Petronius and Ovid", in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* V—*Collection Latomus* 206 (Bruxelles: 1989) 329, n. 29.

[45] See Suet., *Nero* 54 (*Vergili Turnum*), Macr., *Sat.* 5.17.5 (the love-affair between Dido and Aeneas), August., *Serm.* 242.5.5 (Migne, *P.L.* 38.1136) (Aeneas' descent to the Underworld), Jer., *Lett.* 21.13 (*At nunc etiam sacerdotes Dei omissis evangeliis et prophetis videmus comoedias legere, amatoria bucolicorum versuum verba cantare, tenere Vergilium, . . .*). A list of more references to these farcical performances is available in Horsfall 1989, 87, n. 46.

[46] Pomp. 148–58 (Fras.); cf. P. Frassinetti, *Atellanae Fabulae* (Rome: 1967) 107. The titles *Hetaera* (*a fabula palliata* by Turpilius), *Meretrix* (a *fabula palliata* by Caecilius), *Hetaera* (a *fabula Atellana* by Novius), *Hetaera* (a mime by Laberius) show the popularity of the motif. Herodas' Second Mime is connected with brothel-affairs: see Rosenblüth 1909, 52.

Moreover, Plautus' comedies abound in examples where part of the scenery is the house of a courtesan or of a pimp.[47] The painted scene and the faintly preserved inscription on a beaker which is dated to the first or second century A.D., have been considered as a scene from an anonymous mime whose setting may have been an expensive and fashionable bordello.

> The individual roles of the *dramatis mimi* can be hypothesized as follows: A Wine-drinker (A) appears barefoot near the door, perhaps carrying a jug of wine. As he attempts an exit—saying to himself (or in response) his gnomic pronouncements against the brothel's expensive courtesans—the Brothel-keeper (B) beckons him back. He offers him a different Courtesan, "Opora" (C), for his taking, but she protests that her master has called her from another customer. A Slave or Attendant (D) may serve as a type of narrator for the audience.[48]

Again, the British Museum No 1984 papyrus from Fayoum (*circa* second century A.D.) contains probably a mime-scene of a love-affair and may be taking place in a brothel with a pimp (?) involved.[49] Nevertheless, one should not go as far as to say that this scene of the novel was inspired when Petronius saw a mimic (or pantomimic) performance based on a Vergilian episode. The starting-point must have been everyday low-life events which were conceived by the author through the ridiculous improvisation of roles in the field of literary tradition and, especially, through the masks of theatrical life.

Trying to get away from this filthy place, Encolpius meets Ascyltus at the other entrance to the brothel (7.4). The reference to another entrance need not be interpreted only as the actual description of a brothel with two entrances but could help the audience of the novel to visualize the place as a stage with two opposite entrances. Ascyltus seems equally exhausted and half-dead (*aeque lassus ac moriens*) (7.4) and Encolpius laughs (7.5), not only from relief because he happened to find in that horrible place the very person he was looking for, but also to mock Ascyltus, and ironically asks for the reason of his presence there (7.5). The narrator's comment on the possible reason for this funny coincidence (*putares ab eadem anicula esse deductum* 'One would think that he was brought by the same little old woman') (7.4)

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[47] See Pl., *Men.*, *Per.*, *Poen.*, *Pseud.*, and *Truc.*; Ter., *Eun.*, *Phorm.*

[48] R. Kotansky, "The Cohn Beaker: The Inscription", *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* (Malibu, Calif.) 9 (1981), 91.

[49] See A. Körte, "Bruchstück eines Mimus", *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete* 6 (1920), 4, 8.

prepares the audience for Ascyltus' forthcoming story. Ascyltus' scenario presents many striking similarities to Encolpius' story.[50] It is uncertain, however, whether we should accept Ascyltus' version as true or false. This decision depends partly on the vague phrase 'a little while ago' (*paulo ante*) (9.4) which defines the period of time in which Ascyltus tried to assault Giton. On the other hand, one should not forget that precisely the same incident of someone making advances to Ascyltus will occur at 92.7–10, where the indefatigable man will eventually accept the sexual proposals of the infamous Roman knight. Due to the fragmentation of the text, one can only speculate on what had happened to Encolpius and Ascyltus at the brothel. It seems that a fight takes place induced by the strong influence of the aphrodisiac *satyrion* (8.4). The whole incident reminds one of a farcical scene, the drink and the fracas being popular motifs in slapstick theatre.[51]

Again because of the fragmentary state of the text, Giton's appearance in the scene is quite peculiar. This creature, whose actual description we learn only at 97.2 (*puer . . . annorum circa XVI, crispus, mollis, formosus* 'a boy . . . about sixteen years old, with curly hair, soft skin, good looks'; cf. (58.5) *comula ista besalis* 'that eight-inch curly hair of yours'), looks to Encolpius' Vergilian eyes like a heavenly figure covered charmingly in mist (9.1). The author does not fail to point out the dramatic side of Giton's personality: the persistent refusal to tell the truth, the stubbornness, the tears, the hypocritical dignity (9.2–3),[52] everything in his behaviour shows that the way he expresses his feelings is entirely artificial and false. In fact, the boy's technique of expressing virtue[53] and his hesitation to disclose what happened, resemble strikingly Seneca's account (*Ep.* 11.7) of the methods, which actors adopt to imitate modesty, and the tricky ways of slaves in Roman comedies in order to succeed in enticing other characters into a trap:

[50] *mater* (7.1) / *pater familiae* (8.2); *numquid scis ubi ego habitem?* (7.1) / *ducem se itineris humanissime promisit* (8.2); *in locum secretiorem venimus* (7.2) / *per anfractus deinde obscurissimos* (8.3).

[51] On the use of drinks in mime-plots see Plut., *De Soll. Anim.* 973E (καὶ φαρμάκου ποιουμένων ἐν αὐτῷ πεῖραν ὑπνωτικοῦ μὲν ὑποκειμένου δ' εἶναι θανασίμου); the Μοιχεύτρια-mime 42–3 (Page). Cf. ch. two, n. 77. On comic brawls see ch. six, n. 46.

[52] Cf. Charinus' gestures to look sad in Pl., *Merc.* 599–600.

[53] *verecundia*; cf. 25.3 (*Gitona, verecundissimum puerum*), 93.4 (*multaque alia moderationis verecundiaeque verba, quae formam eius* [i.e. *Gitonis*] *egregie decebant*).

> *Artifices scaenici, qui imitantur adfectus, qui metum et trepidationem exprimunt, qui tristitiam repraesentant, hoc indicio imitantur verecundiam: deiciunt enim vultum, verba submittunt, figunt in terram oculos et deprimunt. Ruborem sibi exprimere non possunt; nec prohibetur hic nec adducitur;*
> Performers on stage, who imitate emotions, who depict fear and perturbation, who portray sorrow, imitate modesty with the following signs: they lower their gaze, reduce the tone of their voice, keep their eyes fixed on the ground and force them down. They cannot express blushing on their faces, for this emotion can be neither prevented nor induced;

similarly, when Tranio lies to Theopropides that his son, Philolaches, has bought a house, he must convince him that this new purchase is an excellent bargain; so he uses tricks, such as pseudo-hesitation and exclamations, and makes the old man insist on asking and thus fall into the trap (Pl., *Most.* 640–2).

Giton narrates the cause of his grief: Ascyltus tried to rape him (9.4–5). It is not clear from Giton's description if the actual rape eventually took place. We do not need to find out. The significant detail to be noted is that not only the description of the whole incident is made in an epic tone which frames the sexual events but that the actual rape-attempt is described as a role-game. Giton becomes the prudent Lucretia and Ascyltus the lewd Tarquinius, who uses his penis for a sword.[54] This incident is just a small sample of how Encolpius, Giton, and most of the other heroes of the novel perceive their way of living: like acting roles.[55] This role-playing, however, has nothing to do with psychological or any other kind of anxiety or with the necessity for self-expression either by the main characters or by the author of the novel.[56] Ascyltus' historical framing of his

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[54] See J.N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore: 1982) 21.

[55] See the acute comment on *Sat.* 9.5 by George 1966, 340–1; cf. Wooten 1976, 71.

[56] See H.D. Rankin, "Some Themes of Concealment and Pretence in Petronius' *Satyricon*", *Latomus* 28 (1969), 116: 'The tragedy of people like Encolpius is perhaps that on no level are they capable of being taken seriously, though they are capable of suffering.' Slater's brilliant remarks on the theatricality of this novel conclude, unfortunately, thus: "Encolpius' quest for meaning in the *Satyricon* takes two forms, then: a search for a frame which will allow him to interpret and manipulate experience outside himself, and a search for a role which will allow him to fashion a meaningful self (i.e., be able to contain and integrate his inner experiences) . . . A similar sense of incompleteness and longing for meaning informs his intellect. Encolpius wanders from the declamations of the rhetorical schools to monuments of visual arts and the efforts of contemporary poetry, neither finding what he seeks nor ceasing to search . . ." (1990(b), 248).

attempt to rape Giton resembles strongly the kind of literary parody the farcical stage of the *phlyaces* or the theatre of the mimes would have practised in their stage-productions.[57] Although legends and historical facts were a popular material in theatrical forms, it is far-fetched to claim that here also we have a similar actual theatrical piece of farce. The fact remains, though, that the element of the theatrical game is obvious—even though indirect—and quite amusing, since two of the most well-known characters of Roman historical tradition are used in such a low-life event.

The quarrel which follows between Encolpius and Ascyltus (9.6–10.2) is defined from the start as false, exaggerated, artificial. Surrounded by the verb 'pretend' (*finxit*) (9.7) at the beginning, and by shouts of laughter (*in risum diffusi*) (10.3) at the end, it suggests that one should interpret everything which is said in this exchange of assaults in its staged context and not necessarily accept it as a source of information for the lost parts of the novel or as a realistic sample of a homosexual's angry mood.[58] A close examination of the young men's insulting speeches reveals the rhetorical side of this most extraordinary dialogue through the symmetrical way in which the phrases are disposed and the innovative manner in which complicated and comic nouns of abuse are formed.[59]

It is true that the pieces of information which Ascyltus provides about Encolpius can tempt the contemporary reader to reconstruct Encolpius' past.[60] Unfortunately, we are not able by means of comparison with the rest of the text to check whether they are true or simply groundless accusations. The possibilities of murder, of participating in gladiatorial shows, of failing to have sex with a woman,

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[57] On the comic subversion of famous scenes (rape of Cassandra, Antigone captured, etc.) in the phlyax-vases of the fourth century B.C. see A.D. Trendall, *Phlyax Vases* (Institute of Classical Studies. Bulletin Supplement No. 19. University of London: 1967) 15–7; O. Taplin, *Comic Angels and Other Approaches to Greek Drama through Vase-Paintings* (Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1993) 79–88. Cf. Plautus' *Amph.* For the ridiculing treatment of mythological figures by the mimes see Wüst 1932, 1752, cols. 9–22; Rosenblüth 1909, 44–5, and Introduction, n. 5.

[58] T.W. Richardson, "Homosexuality in the *Satyricon*", *Classica et Mediaevalia* 35 (1984), 116 regards, rather implausibly, Ascyltus' violent behaviour (9.4–5; 11.4; 79.9) as an example of the quarrels between homosexual lovers as described in Xen., *Symp.* 8.4.

[59] See Walsh 1970, 87.

[60] For such a reconstruction see A. Daviault, "Mais, au fait, qui était donc Encolpe?", in *Mélanges offerts en hommage au Révérend Père Étienne Gareau* (Éditions de l' Université d' Ottawa: 1982) 165–72.

and of a sexual scene in a garden[61] stimulate the audience's fantasy and could fit with the nature of this novel. It has been thoroughly discussed whether the abusive allegations are true or not.[62] I believe that there is not enough evidence to prove definitely that we are dealing here with real facts of Encolpius' past, although these actions are not incompatible with his character. But the double reference to the gladiators (*gladiator obscene* (9.8); *meridiana harena* (9.8))[63] certainly signifies that Ascyltus gives his words a fighting character (cf. *pugnasti* (9.10)) and chooses to classify poor Encolpius in the category of the unsuccessful show-man. Gladiators were notorious for their virility[64] and by this characterization Ascyltus is able to summarize skilfully Encolpius' sexual insufficiency and his amphitheatre-*persona*.

During this breathless succession of name-calling[65] the audience is assured once and for all about the hypocritical behaviour of the hero in the scene at the school of rhetoric (10.2–3). The masks have fallen. Only one thing is left now to finish the fracas, the mimic laughter. It is found in many other 'theatrical' scenes of the novel (cf. 18.7;

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[61] *Sat.* 9.8–10. A lengthy discussion of these passages is provided by P. Soverini, "Le perversioni di Encolpio. (Per una nuova possibilità di interpretazione di Petr. 9.8 s.)", *Materiali e contributi per la storia della narrativa greco-latina* 1 (1976), 99–107.

[62] See the arbitrary comments of Highet 1983, 198. G. Bagnani, "Encolpius Gladiator obscenus", *Classical Philology* 51 (1956), 24–7 and R. Pack, "The Criminal Dossier of Encolpius", *Classical Philology* 55 (1960), 31–2 regard the passages not as biographical but as abusive, although they paradoxically accept, together with Soverini 1976, 101, n. 5 and 102, n. 6, the event of murder by Encolpius as an actual fact. D.D. Mulroy, "Petronius 81.3", *Classical Philology* 65 (1970), 255 interprets rightly the references to gladiators in their proper sexual context. Cf., also, Soverini, "Polisemia ed espressione 'indiretta': su taluni aspetti della trattazione Petroniana di argomenti 'sessuali'", *Bollettino di Studi Latini* 8 (1978), 265–6. S.M. Cerutti & L.JR. Richardson, "The *retiarius tunicatus* of Suetonius, Juvenal, and Petronius", *American Journal of Philology* 110 (1989), 594 speculate that Ascyltus' abuses refer to Encolpius' having taken part in an obscene gladiatorial *ludus*, like those described by Seneca (*NQ* 7.31.3) and Juvenal (6.O1–O13).

[63] For this emendation see Walsh, "Petronius 9.7–10", *Classical Review* 27 (1967), 137–8. J.F. Kileen, "Petronius 9.8", *Hermes* 97 (1969), 127–8 accepts the text as it is, taking *ruina* to mean 'financial ruin'. Bagnani 1956, 27 takes, improbably, *ruina* to refer to the *harena* and not to the *gladiator* (he translates: 'whom the arena dismissed because of its collapse'), thus connecting the event with the actual disastrous collapse of the amphitheatre in Fidenae in 27 A.D.

[64] See J.P.V.D. Balsdon, *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome* (London—Sydney—Toronto: 1969) 297.

[65] D.M. Paschall, *The Vocabulary of Mental Aberration in Roman Comedy and Petronius* (diss.) (Baltimore: 1939) 19–20 compares Ascyltus' abuse *homo stultissime* (10.1) with similar insulting expressions in the Roman comedy, directed especially against the *comicos stultos senes* (Caec. Stat., 243; Pl., *Bacch.* 945; *Capt.* 656).

19.1; 140.10), affirming the insincerity of the attitudes adopted, and constitutes an inseparable element of the mimic style.[66]

Encolpius insists on his desire to get rid of Ascyltus (10.7). The temporary postponement of their separation, due to their role-playing as scholars (*tamquam scholastici*) (10.6), makes Encolpius express his feelings in an apophthegm, similar to those of the mimographer Publ. Syrus: *tardum est differre quod placet* (10.7).[67]

The ensuing love-scene between Encolpius and Giton while Ascyltus is watching through the door, includes most of the motifs one will recognize mainly in the other sexual scenes of the novel with a theatrical pattern: the furtive glance at other people's love-making (*cum Ascyltos furtim se foribus admovit* 'when Ascyltus moved stealthily to the door') (11.2),[68] the explosive laughter (*risu itaque plausuque cellulam implevit* 'thus he filled the small room with laughter and applause') (11.2),[69] the violent blows (*lorum de pera solvit et me coepit non perfunctorie verberare* 'he untied a leather strap from his bag and began to flog me diligently') (11.4),[70] the neologisms or sexual puns (*vesticontubernium facis?* 10.4).[71]

The scene is structured in the comic manner of what may be termed in a theatrical text as a 'double audience-spectacle' pattern; according to this comic device, the playwright creates two theatrical levels on stage, and puts one group of characters on each level. The events which take place on one of the levels form the spectacle for the character(s) of the other, while the audience of the actual perfor-

[66] See Quint., 6.3.8; Nicoll 1931, 126–7.

[67] Cf. P. Syrus, *Sent.* 302 (*Longum est, quodcunque flagitavit cupiditas*) in O. Friedrich, *Publilii Syri Mimi Sententiae* (Georg Olms, Hildesheim: 1964; Nachdruck der Ausgabe Berlin 1880) 54.

[68] Cf. *Sat.* 26.4, 96.1, 140.11, and see Preston 1915, 262.

[69] Cf. *Sat.* 18.7, 19.1, 140.10.

[70] The same maltreatment occurs in the Quartilla-scene, as well. It is better to see it in the tradition of pseudo-violence in the comedies or in the mime (e.g. Herodas' Fifth Mime or the Oxyrhynchus mime of the Μοιχεύτρια) than as an example of sadism in the novel, a covert sexual preference of the author: Sullivan 1968(a), 250 connects it, along with other instances, to scopophilia.

[71] This word is not included in the *OLD*. Rose, "Petroniana", *Rheinisches Museum* 111 (1968), 253–4 collects the possible emendations and comments on them. He emends: *veste contubernium* ('are you setting up a home under your coat?'). I do not see why an emendation is needed. Why should not Petronius use a word that, as Fraenkel comments (see Rose 1968, 253), is more Plautine than Petronian? One should not forget the existence of another neologism in a similar context to this: *pygesiaca sacra* (140.5. This is, however, only Ernout's reading. In his third edition of the novel, Müller reads *Aphrodisiaca sacra.* See ch. seven, section three).

mance watches both groups and levels simultaneously.[72] This enables the playwright to create comedy through the effective contrast of funny situations. A structure of this kind differs from the 'play-within-a-play' scenes where the spectacle on one of the levels is a deliberately staged performance intended to trick the character(s) / audience of the other level.[73] Its essence is nearer to an eavesdropping-scene, although it differs slightly in that there a character usually just listens carefully without making any comments or movements.[74] In the passage in the novel Ascyltus is behind the door and silently watches Giton and Encolpius making love. The audience of the novel watches not only the homosexual couple but Ascyltus and his movements (*furtim se foribus admovit discussisque fortissime claustris* 'he moved towards the door without being noticed, and shook back the bolts very violently') (11.2) at the same time. The organization as well as the function of the two spectacles is strikingly similar to the organization and function of other spectacles: the Philomela-scene (140.11), and the fracas-scene in the inn (96.1–2). This peeping through the door, which will prove to be a favourite Petronian technique, does not signify any scopophiliac tendencies and should not be regarded as an influence emerging from the structure of elegiac poetry.[75] It must be seen as a visual device for comic purposes, one unit in the whole context of farcical sexual adventures.

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[72] See, for example, Pl., *Asin.* 878–910: Artemona and the parasite are watching Argyrippus, Philaenium, and Demaenetus revelling. Cf. Slater, *Plautus in Performance. The Theatre of the Mind* (Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, New Jersey: 1985) 162–5.

[73] See, for example, Pl., *Cas.* 621–719: Pardalisca pretends in a tragic manner in front of Lysidamus that Casina has gone mad; Pl., *Mil.* 1216–80: Acroteleutium pretends to be enamoured by the pompous soldier, while Pyrgopolynices is listening to her conversation with her maid.

[74] In Plautus' *Trinummus*, Stasimus, the slave, watches Lesbonicus and Lysiteles, the two young men, arguing on the matter of the dowry of Lesbonicus' sister (627–704). Although Stasimus withdraws at the beginning of the scene (625–6) and does not make any comments in between, at the end he functions as both the audience and the judges who give the prize of best comedy to Lysiteles (705–6). He even explains comically the criteria adopted for such a decision (707).

[75] See Sullivan 1968(a), 242 and Schmeling, "The *Exclusus Amator* motif in Petronius", in *Fons Perennis. Saggi critici di Filologia Classica raccolti in onore del Prof. Vittorio D' Agostino* (Torino: 1971) 338.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ADVENTURE OF THE STOLEN TUNIC AND QUARTILLA'S ORGY

I. *Tunicularia: Sat. 12.1–15.9*

It is generally accepted by the majority of scholars, who are dealing with the reconstruction of the *Satyrica*, that the scene in the market-place follows the theatrically presented love-making (*vesticontubernium*) of Encolpius and Giton (11.4), and precedes Quartilla's ritual orgies (16.1 ff.). The frequent gaps in chapters one to twenty seven of the surviving text make the plot of the novel difficult to follow[1] and, despite some phrases, which might function as links or signs for the correct order of the episodes,[2] there is not a firmly fixed coherence in the adventures before the *Cena Trimalchionis*. Sullivan rightly points out some of the questions this lack of coherence raises: are we to identify the woman accompanying the peasant (12.3; 14.5) with the one that precedes Quartilla into the heroes' room (16.3)? Should we take at face-value the robberies (*latrocinia*) (17.4), of which Quartilla accuses the friends, referring to the theft of the cloak (12.2) (*raptum latrocinio pallium*), or should we take it metaphorically? Sullivan's suggestion, however, is no more than speculation. For reasons not explained clearly, he is inclined to think 'that 16–26.6 only is a displaced portion of BOOK XIV and that 1–15 is a more or less continuous narrative and part of BOOK XV.'[3] None of the problems is solved, the situation still remains as chaotic as before.

Leaving aside these textual matters and keeping to the market-place scene alone, we realize immediately that we face one of the most complete and the most perplexing short stories of the *Satyrica*. The gaps are not frequent but the plot moves so fast that the audi-

[1] See Van Thiel 1971, 27–9, 30–1, 33, 35–6.

[2] 16.3 (*Mulier autem erat operto capite [illa scilicet quae paulo ante cum rustico steterat] et 'me derisisse' inquit 'vos putabatis?'*) is such a phrase. The parenthetical sentence suggests that the Quartilla-scene comes after—and is connected to—the market-place scene. By bracketing, however, the sentence as an explanatory addition made by a scribe, Müller, *Petronius. Satyrica* (München: 1983) ad loc. destroys this link.

[3] Sullivan 1968(a), 46.

ence can easily miss the thin line of the narrative-continuity. The two elements of brevity and continuity of episode, in combination with the absence of the sexual, make this a popular scene for analysis by Petronian scholars. My intention is to examine the text to see if it provides evidence for regarding this episode as a narrative equivalent of a theatrical piece. The staged aspect of the passages will be demonstrated through the analysis of the theatrical setting (time and place), the typecast character and the role-playing of the *Dramatis Personae*, the traditional exploitation of the central theme of the plot (the hidden treasure) by the comic stage, and the theatrical origin of the tricks used for the dénouement.[4]

Before the action begins the narrator takes care to establish in a concise manner the setting of the scene and the dramatic time of the events; both of these introductory notes aim at putting the deeds into a clearly defined frame, as if they were stage-directions addressed to an audience which has to know the particular time and place of the plot at the beginning of the play.[5] The adventures of Encolpius and Ascyltus are here located in the market-place (*forum*). The market-place as backcloth for the enactment of an amusing story occurs again in Apuleius' novel, and it has been suggested that both the scene in Petronius and the one in Apuleius draw their origin from the Milesian tales.[6] Vitruvius informs us that one of the two entrances in the theatre was supposed to be *a foro* (5.6.8) and Plautus provides ample evidence for this.[7] The market-place is never the stage where action takes place in the surviving Roman comedies, but one cannot deny its use, though in a conventional manner, by the Roman playwrights.

The mention of time which immediately follows (*deficiente iam die*

[4] See U. Knoche, *Roman Satire* (Bloomington—London) 1975, 113; Corbett 1970, 49: 'The whole episode is pure farce, an admirable plot for mime or Atellan play with stock characters, the dim-witted rustic, the needy scholar, the pettifogging lawyer. Petronius treats us to a slice of low life with the utmost realism of detail.'

[5] Cf. the masterly way in which Terence informs his audience of the time, place, and situation in *Ad.* 26–7. See A.S. Gratwick, *Terence. The Brothers* (Aris and Phillips: 1987) 229–30.

[6] See Walsh 1970, 88. More views on the significance of the Apuleian episode are conveniently gathered by A. Scobie, *Apuleius. Metamorphoses (Asinus Aureus) I—A Commentary* (Meisenheim am Glan: 1975) 126–7.

[7] Exhaustive—and exhausting—lists of exits and entrances to and from the *forum* are in E.F. Rambo, "The Significance of Wing-Entrances in Roman Comedy", *Classical Philology* 10 (1915), 429 ff.; M. Johnston, *Exits and Entrances in Roman Comedy* (diss.) (Geneva, NY: 1933) 104 ff., for both Plautus and Terence.

'when it was already dusk' and *obscuritas temporis* 'the shadows of the time') (12.1) cannot pass unnoticed by a Roman audience, since 'in the evening, when legal and banking business was over and vehicular traffic was stopped, all manner of amusing hucksters would find room in the *forum*.'[8] Cicero and the Roman satirists describe colourfully, but with a strong feeling of contempt, the picturesque human types one could meet at the market-place.[9] In his comic account of what kind of people one must expect to find at a certain place, the *choragus* mentions (Pl., *Curc.* 474–6) that one will meet

> *symbolarum conlatores apud forum piscarium.*
> *in foro infumo boni homines atque dites ambulant;*
> *in medio propter canalem, ibi ostentatores meri;*
> joint-contributors of the *symbola* at the fish-market; in the lower end of the market good-natured and wealthy people walk. There, in the middle part near the gutter, those who make just an ostentatious display;

the quoted texts do not simply underline that the quantity of things for sale (*frequentiam rerum venalium*) (12.1) comes from suspect dealers (*fidem male ambulantem*) (12.1).[10] In a way they foreshadow the following incident and warn the audience to expect an unusual series of events in a place where you can meet only persons whose honesty is doubtful. This is actually fulfilled: thieves are everywhere, even the night-policemen (*advocati nocturni*) (15.2) who promise a solution through justice, are nothing but thieves (*praedones*) (15.5) who look for an opportunity to take with them the precious garment.

It is almost impossible to say with certainty that Petronius modelled this scene focusing solely on real life, or on the theatre, or on satire, or on the Milesian tales. However, the choice of this specific theme, and the setting of the scene at this particular time, promise, before even the beginning of the actual facts, an amusing and unexpected spectacle.

The first characteristic that strikes the audience of this episode is not so much its 'theatricality' as the continuous employment of legal

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[8] J. Gow, *Q. Horati Flacci Saturarum Liber I* (Cambridge: 1932) ad 1.6.13; cf. M. Brozek, "Szeneriebeschreibungen bei Petronius", *Eos* 60 (1972), 288.

[9] See Hor., *S.* 1.6.111–4; Ap. Claudius in Cic., *De div.* 1.132; Juv., 6.588.

[10] This phrase must not be taken as a reference to the quality of the merchandise. For a collection and evaluation of the interpretations given see A. Aragosti, "L' episodio petroniano del *forum* (*Sat.* 12–15): assimilazione dei codici nel racconto", *Materiali e Discussioni per l' analisi dei testi classici* 3 (1979), 101, n. 3, and G. Focardi, "A proposito di Petr. *Satyr.* 15.2: un' allusione giuridica in *advocati . . . nocturni*?", *Sileno* 12 (1986), 57, n. 3.

procedures (13.4; 14.1; 14.7; 15.2). The accumulation, however, of theatrical elements in the scene is equally significant. We do not really know if there is a special reason for Encolpius' and Ascyltus' visit to the market-place, but what is stated clearly in the text is that they take the opportunity to sell a cloak, acquired probably by theft (12.2), in a most amusing manner: *atque in quodam angulo laciniam extremam concutere, si quem forte emptorem splendor vestis posset adducere* 'and we (began) to shake its extreme edge in a corner, in case the brightness of the garment could attract any purchaser.' (12.2). When the countryman (*rusticus*)[11] and the girl (*muliercula*) enter the market-place, the narrator comments on the timing of the arrival: *nec diu moratus* 'without delaying any longer' (12.3). This, at first sight, seems a natural statement on the period of time in the action. But if it is regarded in the light of the following events, it becomes a theatrical entrance where everything else is already staged, and it is time a new *persona* entered in order to move the plot.[12] His first reaction is, indeed, appropriate to the stage: *propius accessit ac diligentius considerare pallium coepit* 'he approached closer and proceeded to examine the cloak very carefully.' (12.3).

Here we have the first hints of the theatrical motif of 'recognition' which is employed in a farcical context and will be completed by the *muliercula* at 14.5 (*mulier aperto capite . . . magnaque vociferatione latrones tenere clamavit* 'the woman who had her head veiled . . . shouted in a loud outcry "Thieves"'); these are parallel with two more 'recognitions': Encolpius recognizes, though gradually, the *rusticus* who had found their *tunicula* in the mysterious, remote spot (*solitudine*) (12.3; 12.5), and Ascyltus identifies the *tunica* on the *rusticus*' shoulders as their own which had in some way, unknown to us, been lost (12.4). One can visualize the grimaces of wonder, surprise, and amazement, being gradually expressed in the persons' faces, like mimic actors who amuse their audience with the distortion of their facial features. It is a shock to the two young men to realize that their 'treasure' was still intact inside the filthy garment (12.6–13.2); accordingly, the narrator does not limit himself to the actual statement of the 'recognition' but goes even further to describe the impact this event made on the person involved: *ac subito exanimatus conticuit* 'and suddenly he was

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[11] There is a title *Rusticus* among the fragments of the *fabulae Atellanae* by Pomponius which may imply that he was a stock character in native Italian drama. See Frassinetti 1967, 108.

[12] See Aragosti 1979, 102.

breathless and fell silent' (12.4), and *o lusum fortunae mirabilem* 'what a wonderful joke of Fortune' (13.1).[13]

These comments, in indirect speech, are equivalent to those made in direct speech by tragic *personae* at the moment of their recognition-scene.[14] And as in tragedies a 'recognition' is not necessarily the happy ending, but the beginning of another series of difficulties which the tragic heroes must face together now, so in the *Satyrica* the two *fratres* must deal with legal problems. Once more, the hypocrisy and role-playing of Ascyltus, the declaimer, who adapts his behaviour to fit the circumstances, is subtly delineated by the author.[15] The major difficulty, however, is that above justice itself money rules the world. The elegiac verses on this subject (14.2) may have originated from a Publilian apophthegm (P. Syr., *Sent.* 458: *Pecuniae omne regimen est rerum omnium*), and the contrast between the ridiculous farcical situation of the market-place and the highly moralising axioms could be justified and explained through the influence of the mimic stage.[16] But, since the power of money was a *locus communis* in different literary genres,[17] it is difficult to establish definitely Petronius' source.

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[13] According to Aragosti 1979, 103 this exclamation proves that Fortune functions as a plot-moving device and forms the main element which gives the scene a comic structure. Certainly, the monologue of the θεὸς Τύχη in Menander's Ἀσπίς 97–148 and Pseudolus' statement in Plautus' *Pseud.* 678–80 about the superiority of fortune over the human mind confirm his theory (cf. Pl., *Truc.* 217–22). For the prominence of fortune in mimic plots see Cic., *Phil.* 2.65 and Rosenblüth 1909, 46–7. On the Fortuna-motif as theme which links the episodes of this novel see L. Callebat, "Structures narratives et modes de représentation dans le *Satyricon* de Pétrone", *Revue des Études Latines* 52 (1967), 289. A useful discussion of the original way in which Petronius perceives the instability of fortune in human affairs should be consulted in E. Auerbach, *Mimesis. The representation of reality in Western Literature* (Princeton, New Jersey: 1953) 28–30. The possibility remains open, however, that Petronius took this motif from the Greek Romances, where Τύχη and Ἔρως move the threads of the plot: a selective bibliography on the subject is provided by Aragosti 1979, 104, n. 11; for illustrations of the goddess Τύχη and her role in each of the surviving Greek romances see T. Hägg, *Eros und Tyche* (Mainz am Rhein: 1987) 26 ff.

[14] Cf., in a tragic context, Orestes' speech when he recognizes Iphigeneia (Eur., *I.T.* 795–7); Iphigeneia has the same feelings which do not let her speak (838–40).

[15] See Walsh 1970, 88: '. . . the moral indignation of Ascyltus, as he condemns the corruption of the courts, is expressed with the passionate vehemence of a thief caught red-handed.'

[16] See Collignon 1892, 280.

[17] Aragosti 1979, 108, n. 19 collects some of the relevant passages: Publ. Syr., 458 Fried.; Luc., 1120 M.; Alcae., fr. 138 Rein. (=122 L); Pind., *Isthm.* 2.11; Varro, *Menip. Sat.* (*Sexagesis*) 499 (Astbury).

The facts that the hidden-treasure motif is a stock-comedy theme and that the Petronian incident could have been based on such a theatrical tradition seem to have been disregarded by scholars. In this case one should not forget that the incident at the *forum* is only the *second* part of a story which started earlier when Encolpius and his friends had somehow acquired treasure and had hidden it temporarily putting it inside an old tunic in a lonely spot, until a country-man found it by chance and took it with him without knowing what he actually had on his shoulders. It would be speculative to adduce as parallel the *Aulularia*, a mime by D. Laberius (23, Bonaria), for the one surviving verse gives no hint on its content. The *Tunicularia*, a *fabula palliata* by Cn. Naevius (99–105, Ribbeck), is more promising, for its title suggests that it might have something to do with the significant role the *tunica* played in the novel as a means for hiding the treasure; according to Donatus the *argumentum* of L. Lanuvinus' *fabula palliata*, *Thensaurus*, is as follows:

> *adulescens, qui rem familiarem ad nequitiam prodegerat, servum mittit ad patris monumentum, quod senex sibi vivus magnis opibus apparaverat, ut id aperiret, inlaturus epulas, quas pater post annum decimum caverat sibi inferri. sed eum agrum, in quo monumentum erat, senex quidam avarus ab adulescente emerat. servus ad aperiendum monumentum auxilio usus senis thesaurum cum epistola ibidem repperit. senex thesaurum tamquam a se per tumultum hostilem illic defossum retinet et sibi vindicat. adulescens iudicem capit, apud quem prior senex, qui aurum retinet, causam suam sic agit:* . . .
> A young lad who had squandered his family's property in vices, sends a slave to the monument of his father, which the old man had prepared for himself with great financial expense when he was alive; the slave was to open it and bring in the sumptuous meal, which the father had decreed to be brought to him after the tenth year. However, some greedy old man had bought from the young lad the field, in which the monument stood. The slave opens the tomb with the help of the old man and there he finds a treasure together with a letter. The old man retains possession of the treasure on the spot creating a hostile fuss, as if it were buried by him, and he lays claim to it for himself. The young man goes to court, where the old man, who retains the gold, pleads his case first with the following words: . . . [18]

One must not fail to recognize the scene of two persons disputing and fighting for the property of a treasure, as well as notice the

[18] The citation in O. Ribbeck, *Scaenicae Romanorum Poesis Fragmenta. Volumen II. Comicorum Fragmenta* (Lipsiae: 1898) 96–7 goes on: cf. Θησαυρὸς *Anaxandridis Archedici Cratetis Dioxippi Diphili Menandri; nam Philemonis fabulam Plautus vertit in Trinummo. Menandrum Luscii auctorem fuisse probabilis est virorum doctorum coniectura.*

multitude of Greek New-Comedy playwrights who have used the same motif in their plays.[19] It is likely that Petronius also took the hidden treasure-motif from the comic tradition, Plautus' *Aulularia* being the typical surviving example of the subject's treatment on the comic stage.[20]

The only means for the two *fratres* to get hold of their own property with the treasure is to buy it (14.1), but their financial situation does not allow them to do so. What amount of money they had is not easy to clarify, for the textual difficulties and the numerous emendations create considerable confusion.[21] Schmeling discusses this passage and offers another solution to the problem. His suggestions are not totally original, since he is reviving and amplifying an earlier comment which connects the Petronian passage with two other passages in Horace (*Ep.* 1.7.22–3) and Plautus (*Poen.* 597–9);[22] Horace uses the image of real money, juxtaposing it with lupine-seeds presented as false money, in order to show the practical wisdom of a virtuous person: *vir bonus et sapiens dignis ait esse paratus / nec tamen ignorat quid distent aera lupinis* 'A virtuous and wise man claims to be available for the worthy, and yet he knows well the difference between coins and lupine-seeds.'

Lupine-seeds were used for counters in playing games or for stage-money.[23] In Plautus' *Poen.*, Collybiscus, the bailiff, following the instructions of the cunning slave Milphio and his master Agorastocles, pretends to be a foreigner, and some advocates, playing the part of witnesses, conspire with him in order to deceive Lycus, the pimp, make him swear a false oath, and drag him to court; all this is done according to a plan similar to the one in the novel. They have to

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[19] For a discussion of the Greek original of this play and a reconstruction of its plot see C. Garton, *Personal Aspects of the Roman Theatre* (Toronto: 1972) 73–92.

[20] See W. Stockert, *T. Maccius Plautus. Aulularia* (Stuttgart: 1983) 8–9, 14–6.

[21] R.W. Daniel, "Petronius, *Sat.* 14.3 and *Anth. Gr.* 5.63", *Studi Classici e Orientali* 38 (1988), 347–51 summarizes all the previous readings of the passage made by scholars and suggests, in his turn, a new reading: *Sed praeter unum [dipondium] sicel lupinosque quibus destinaveramus mercari, nihil ad manum erat.*

[22] See Schmeling, "Petronius 14.3: Shekels and Lupines", *Mnemosyne* 45 (1992), 535, n. 12, where he refers to Erhard in *Titi Petronii Arbitri Satyricôn quae supersunt,* ed. P. Burman (Utrecht, Vande Water: 1709) 51: *lupinos autem ex Horatio Plautoque alibi docuimus, veros assimilare nummos, id quod et hic locus confirmat.*

[23] See G. Maurach, *Plauti Poenulus* (Heidelberg: 1975) ad loc. W. Allen, JR, "Stage Money (fabam mimum = Cic. *Att.* 1.16.3)", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 90 (1959), 1–8 and H. Comfort, "Stage Money again; *Aulularia* 818–821", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 94 (1963), 34–6 discuss stage-money in detail but they fail to include in their list this Petronian incident.

use money to entice the pimp to the trap, so a purse full of lupine-seeds is regarded as a purse filled with *trecentos nummos numeratos* 'three hundred coins counted out'. The audience, of course, has to know that false money is being used; therefore, the dramatic fiction must break and the advocates have to explain:

> *Aurum est profecto hoc, spectatores, comicum:*
> *macerato hoc pingues fiunt auro in barbaria boves;*
> *verum ad hanc rem agundam Philippum est: ita nos adsimulabimus.*
> Spectators, this gold here is, in fact, a theatrical one: when this gold is made wet, the oxen in foreign lands become fatter; but in order to deal with this affair it is pure Philippean gold: that's what we are going to pretend.

Schmeling's proposal for a theatrical interpretation of the Petronian passage is ingenious and fits the meaning of the scene perfectly:

> The stage is never far from Encolpius' mind, and, when we listen to him here, we should never let the possibility of stage allusions be far from our minds. Therefore when he mentions a coin and *lupini* in the same breath (the MSS read *unum depondium sicel lupinosque*), we should at least consider the possibility of *lupini* being stage-money or counterfeit coins . . . the *lupini* in our text (should) be considered stage money which Encolpius would use to fill up a small bag, on top of which he would place enough coins to cover the *lupini*.[24]

Tricks and schemes of deceit were a favourite topic in Roman comedies and in mimic plots, and Petronius' exploitation of theatre in other scenes of his novel suggests that the scheme Encolpius and Ascyltus chose to undertake, was a sample of the *mimicae fallaciae* Cicero mentions as a regular ingredient of a mimic *argumentum*: *Audiebamus Alexandream, nunc cognoscimus. Illinc omnes praestigiae, illinc, inquam, omnes fallaciae, omnia denique ab eis mimorum argumenta nata sunt.* 'We had heard of Alexandria; now we know it; there all the tricks, there, I say, all the deceits, all the mimic plots were conceived.'[25] Consequently, one must not regard this trick as an isolated device for deceit, but consider it in connection with the rest of the theatrical game that is going on in this scene and in the whole of the novel.

The situation did not turn out the way Encolpius and Ascyltus hoped, for the woman recognized the stolen *pallium* and started

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[24] Schmeling 1992, 534.

[25] Cic., *Pro Rab. Post.* 35; cf. *Sat.* 106.1: *nunc mimicis artibus petiti sumus et adumbrata inscriptione derisi*; Artemid., *Oneir.* 1.76. On schemes in Plautine theatre see G. Petrone, *Teatro antico e inganno: finzioni Plautine* (Palermo: 1983) 5–98, 153–209.

shouting 'Thieves' (14.5). Moving in parallel actions the two friends did exactly the same thing (14.6). In front of our eyes a comic spectacle is staged with parallel movement of the gestures, actions, reactions, and roles of the two groups. The narrator gradually creates all the necessary stage-management for a double audience-spectacle structure in the scene.[26] He first introduces the spectacle, two pairs of people fighting over a precious *pallium* and a torn *tunica*! Then he introduces his first audience, consisting of these who were already in the market-place, and describes their amusement and reactions to the whole incident: *et cociones, qui ad clamorem confluxerant, nostram scilicet de more ridebant invidiam* . . . 'and the dealers, who had flocked together because of the shouting, were laughing at our indignation, obviously in their customary way . . .' (14.7). However, there is the second audience of the scene, consisting of those people who were present at the *recitatio* of the novel. This double pattern is a recurrent device in the narrative technique and demonstrates clearly the theatrical conception of the novel in the mind of its author.

Moreover, other elements in the text demonstrate similar comic-theatrical qualities. The reactions of the two parties (i.e., Encolpius-Ascyltus / *rusticus-mulier*) are so fast that one could visualize the episode as slapstick farce. The two parties change their roles continuously. Those who came to the market in order to sell end up wanting to buy, and vice versa. The legal aspects of these procedures are inevitably ridiculed by the uneven value of the *pallium* and the *tunica*, so the legal frame of the *emptio* and the *rei vindicatio*[27] adds a comic, rather than a serious, flavour to the action. From this interchange of roles and parallel development of actions—one party does the same thing the other party did a few seconds before—,[28] one could argue

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[26] See the discussion of this narrative device, adapted from the stage, on pp. 18–9.

[27] On the function of these legal terms on the narrative of the market-place scene see Bagnani, "Petroniana", in *Classical, Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies in Honor of B.L. Ullmann* I, ed. C. Henderson (Rome: 1964) 231–2; Aragosti 1979, 107 and 109 ff.; Focardi 1986, 58 ff.

[28] (12.3) The *rusticus* examines the *pallium* carefully. / (12.4) Ascyltus recognizes the *tunica* on the *rusticus*' shoulders. (12.5) Encolpius recognizes the *rusticus*. / (14.5) The *mulier* recognizes the *pallium*. (14.5) The *mulier* starts shouting 'Thieves'. / (14.6) Encolpius and Ascyltus do the same thing, *ne videremur nihil agere*. A similar farcical scene unfolds in Plautus' *Amph.* (frgs. 15–16, Lindsay), where both Juppiter and Amphitruo accuse each other of having committed adultery with Alcumena. On the comic effect of the symmetrical reactions of the two parties see D. Gagliardi, *Il Comico in Petronio* (Palermo: 1980) 49.

for a comedy with a double structure, in which the characters and their actions move in the manner of a *comoedia duplex*.[29]

A brief note should be added about this first audience of the scene, the *cociones* ('dealers') (14.7) and the *advocati nocturni* (15.2). *Cocio* is a rare word and occurs as a stage-character in the *Necyomantia*, a mime by Laberius.[30] He is famous for his greediness.[31] But, did Petronius take this figure from the mime or from satire, or even from every-day-life? There could be no definite answer to this problem, if we did not have a description of one *cocio*, given for apparently no other reason than to point out precisely its mimic caricature: *et nescio quis ex cocionibus, calvus, tuberosissimae frontis* 'and somebody from the dealers, bald-headed and with a forehead covered completely with lumps.' (15.4). The baldness of the head (*mimus calvus*) was one of the particular features in the figure of a mime-actor. Juvenal connects a mimic actor's shaved head with the blows (*alapas*) that he receives on stage, while John Chrysostom grumbles:

> another mimic jester enters; he adopts obscene postures, he has rented himself for money to provoke laughter, he feels ashamed if he is not publicly beaten, he has made his cheeks ready in advance to receive the blows of the doors, he has shaved his hair with a razor, so that not even a single hair can intervene between him and the abuses against him.[32]

Combining the mimic feature of baldness and the juridical characteristics of a *cocio* (*qui solebat aliquando etiam causas agere* 'who used some times to plead cases at court') (15.4), the audience understands immediately that the following and the previous interventions by the *cociones* are nothing but false procedures in order to deceive and steal the valuable *pallium* (*Sat.* 15.2, 15.5).

The same conclusions must also apply to the *advocati nocturni*.[33] They seem to be a sort of night-policemen, and it has been suggested that there is a juridical reference into the adjective *nocturni*, which the

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[29] See Aragosti 1979, 103.

[30] See Laber., 79 (Bonar.) and cf. Bonaria 1965, 117.

[31] Porphyrio comments on Hor., *S.* 2.3.25 (ed. W. Meyer): *Mercurialem quasi lucrosum, quia Coctio* (another reading for *cocio*) *appellabatur. omnes enim cociones lucro student.*

[32] John Chrysostom, Περὶ Μετανοίας β′ 291 (Migne, *P.G.* 59.760). Cf. Juv., 5.171–2 (*pulsandum vertice raso / praebebis quandoque caput*) and J.D. Duff, *D. Iunii Iuvenalis Saturae XIV* (Cambridge: 1970) ad loc.; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carm.* 2.2.85–9 (Migne, *P.G.* 37.1583); Nicoll 1931, 87 ff.

[33] The bibliographical survey on the strange meaning of this expression starts from A. von Domaszewski, "Nocturni", *Rheinisches Museum* N.F. 47 (1892), 159–60.

Romans without doubt knew and whose use they appreciated in the context of legal procedures;[34] we, however, are not in the same position as they were. On the other hand, *nocturni* may refer to nothing else than the character and the dishonest intentions of the councillors, the *advocati*, and, in this case, Petronius uses in the cast of his farce the Roman officer who often appeared in the plots of Roman comedies.[35] One way or the other, these figures become essentially theatrical *personae* because Petronius uses them as such in his short story. They are not introduced for a realistic description of a Roman office but because the plot must get complicated and funny, the action must go on and have finally an end.

Encolpius and Ascyltus manage to obtain their *tunica*, but the *cocio* confiscates the valuable *pallium*; this, however, is not the end.

> We never see the end of this story. At 15.8 Encolpius says *et recuperato, ut putabamus, thesauro*. The addition of 'as we thought' suggests they were to be proved wrong. Had something been substituted for the gold in the seams? Do they soon lose the money, perhaps offering it to Quartilla in the ensuing episode as partial compensation for the violation of Priapus' mysteries? Again, we cannot say.[36]

What we have here, however, is not the usual ending of a comedy where the spectators assume in advance that the situation, however complicated, will be solved happily for its characters, and everybody—or almost everybody—will be satisfied; what phrases like *illa est tunicula adhuc, ut apparet, intactis aureis plena* 'this is the small tunic still filled, as it appears to be, with gold untouched' (13.3), and *recuperato, ut putabamus, thesauro* 'after we had regained, as we believed, our treasure' (15.8), seem to suggest is an unexpected outcome inappropriate to the genre of comedy. Nevertheless, this is not a reason to go to the opposite extreme and conclude that a theatrical interpretation of the scene is not feasible. The unexpected ending of the market-place scene is not

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[34] See Focardi 1986, 57–72.

[35] Schmeling 1992, 532: "In Plautus' *Rudens* (1004) Trachalio tries to gain a share of the trunk Gripus found in the sea and demands that a *sequester* be appointed... *Advocati* in Plautus' *Poenulus* (515 ff.) and Terence's *Phormio* (458 ff.) either conspire to deceive or confuse those seeking advice."

[36] Slater 1990(b), 36, n. 25. It is interesting to find an actual reconstruction of the missing text suggested by R. Merkelbach, "Eine Lücke im Petrontext (Kap. 15)", *Rheinisches Museum* 106 (1963), 192: '*nolo quod cupio statim tenere / nec victoria mi placet parata*... < Als sie aber den Lumpenmantel genauer betrachten, stellen sie fest, dass das Geld nicht mehr darin ist. So haben sie erst das Geld verloren und nun den wertvollen Mantel dazu >.'; cf., also, Van Thiel 1971, 30 and n. 2.

so unexpected if we take into account that all the short stories in the novel, which are Milesian tales ["The Pergamene Boy" (85.1–87.10)—"The Matron of Ephesus" (111.1–112.8)] or have characteristics of this genre [the stories of the werewolf (61.6–62.14), the witches (63.3–10), and the unbreakable glass (51.1–6)], have similar 'unexpected' and 'unfinished' endings.[37] One can rightly argue that this is a typical feature of the Milesian tale but it occurs also in the sudden conclusions of the mime.[38]

II. *Mimicae Nuptiae: Sat. 16.1–26.6*

In the ordering of the surviving fragments of the *Satyrica*, which all the contemporary editors of the novel have followed, the Quartilla-episode (16.1–26.6) is placed before the *Cena Trimalchionis*[39] and provides the first shocking experience of the reader with the Petronian text because of its highly sexual tone. There have been many scholarly attempts to interpret this scene from different points of view and, especially, to justify the obsessive prominence of the sexual content that is employed both here and throughout the novel.[40]

[37] A detailed, though unconvincing, discussion on the plot-development and the unexpected ending in Petronius' Milesian tales is in Schmeling 1991, 353–64; he does not take into account Petronius' most probable debt to similarly unfinished endings in the sub-literary genres of the Milesian Tales and the theatre of the mimes.

[38] Cic., *Pro Cael.* 65. Preston 1915, 262, commenting on the structural analogies between Petronius' novel and the farcical theatre, draws attention to 'the manner in which the author accelerates action towards the close of an episode, if several characters are on the scene, engaging everyone in a free-for-all, or ending the incident abruptly by the rapid exit of one of the principals, accompanied often by a slamming of doors.' See *Sat.* 6.2; 15.8; 78.8; 90.1; 91.3; 94.7; 138.3–4.

[39] Sullivan 1968(a), 45–7, complicates further, rather than simplifies, the fragmentary position of chapters 1–26.6, by suggesting that the Quartilla-scene should have been placed in the editions of the novel before the Agamemnon-scene.

[40] Schmeling 1969(a), 49 gives a fine summary, with bibliography, of the different scholarly interpretations, which regard Petronius as satirist, moralist, Epicurean, artist. Sullivan 1968(a), 251 suggests that the author 'was directed by his own fantasies and sexual interest' in using various sexual perversions as themes for his novel. Zeitlin 1971, 656, n. 59 sees sex in the *Sat.* as 'either a source of frustration or an assault upon an unwilling victim.' Slater 1990(b), 243 considers the Quartilla-episode as proof of lack of meaningfulness and integrity in Encolpius' self: 'Quartilla's orgiastic assault on Encolpius and his companions shows that the self is not able even to control its own body against the combination of physical force and a more powerful improvisational imagination. When Encolpius can be made to perform sexually against his will, how meaningful are the concepts of 'will' and 'Encolpius'?'. I find difficult to believe such a moralistic interpretation which has transformed an immoral orgy into a quest

My aim in this section is to apply (and test the validity of) the notions of role-playing and theatricality within a sexual frame in the Petronian narrative of the Quartilla-episode (16.1–26.6), the lustful *pervigilium* that Quartilla, the insatiable priestess of the god Priapus, staged for Encolpius, Giton and Ascyltus at the inn where the three lovers had rented a room (15.8; 19.2). Apart from the obvious reference the narrator makes to Quartilla's mimic laughter (*omnia mimico risu exsonuerant*) (19.1),[41] scholarly observations on the theatrical qualities of this episode have been confined so far to the comparison between themes and characters in mimic plays, and specific motives of plot and characters in this part of Petronius' novel.[42] I will concentrate mainly on the visual aspect of Quartilla's histrionic talent, as it is expressed through gestures and facial expressions, and on further conventional theatrical techniques which she employed in order to strike a stronger impression on her victims and force them to indulge her wishes. Brief reference will also be made to the staged quality of the characters or incidents which are included in Quartilla's programme for the performance of her own Priapus-mime.

Gestures and body language, in general, played an important part in the performer's attempt to act his role successfully and win the audience's applause. It seems that, at least in New Comedy, each part had its own movement, while such a distinction between different postures among different characters not only became a source of laughter and comic effects but also informed the audience about the category and nature of the theatrical type they had in front of them.[43]

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for the true meaning of life. Preston 1915, 266 rightly connects the high degree of sexuality in the novel with the obscenity of the farcical theatre: 'It is clear that the sex interest in the main narrative of Petronius is incidental to a sort of rough phallic comedy . . . their tone (i.e. of the sexual scenes) may be amply explained by assuming that in writing them the author was conforming to the conventions of an impure type of farce.' Cf., also, Rosenblüth 1909, 52.

[41] The passage is mentioned by all studies who touch upon the theatricality of this novel: Collignon 1892, 275; Rosenblüth 1909, 36, n. 2; Preston 1915, 261; Sullivan 1968(a), 221; Walsh 1970, 24; Sandy 1974, 339 and n. 23; Slater 1990(b), 43.

[42] Rosenblüth 1909, 52, and Preston 1915, 266 compare the obscenity of the episode with the impure kind of farcical mimes. Sandy 1974, 340 connects the sodomites of 21.2 and 23.4–5 with mimic κίναιδοι. Rosenblüth 1909, 53 and Sandy 1974, 340, n. 24, speak of the pseudo-marriage between Giton and Pannychis (26.1–3) as an example of the *mimicae nuptiae*, while Walsh 1970, 26 sees the strong Priapic element of the scene in the tradition of the Priapus-mime.

[43] The posture and gestures which Palaestrio adopts in order to devise his scheme (Pl., *Mil. Glor.* 201–15) are characterized as typical of a slave in comedies: *dulice et comoedice* (213). In the same comedy, Acroteleutium must pretend convincingly that

There are no explicit stage-directions in theatrical texts as we have them today,[44] but assumptions can be made based on words or phrases in the text[45] or on ancient *scholia*.[46] Quintilian's amusing account of the repertoire and favourite gestures of the comic actors Demetrius and Stratocles (11.3.178–80), and his constant remarks on the details to which an actor must pay attention if he wants to act properly,[47] demonstrate both that the actors took care of the visual part of a performance, and that the audience diligently noticed and criticized any mistakes or deficiencies in the actors' gestures. The most enlightening example is Quintilian's suggestions for the proper acting of the opening lines of Terence's *Eunuchus* (46–8), where the actor, in order to show his anxiety, must make dramatic pauses, change the tone of his voice, move his hands, and turn his face this way and that (11.3.182: *Hic enim dubitationis moras, vocis flexus, varias manus, diversos nutus actor adhibebit*).

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she is a high-class matron; therefore, she should dress like one (791), have her hair done (792), wear a linen headband (792), and walk decently (872) (cf. 897, 899). Pyrgopolynices must assume the posture of a celebrity (1044–5; cf. Pl., *Per.* 306–8). See the discussion of the topic in D. Wiles, *The masks of Menander. Sign and meaning in Greek and Roman performance* (Cambridge Univ. Press: 1991) 192–208.

[44] Exceptions to this rule may constitute some mimic texts in which there are directions for the musical background of the plot and the entrance of a character dressed in a particular manner: see Page 1942, 338–9; C. Pavese, "Un frammento di mimo in un nuovo papiro fiorentino", *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* N.S. 38 (1966), 68.

[45] Imagine, for example, the gestures which accompany the simulated madness of Menaechmus II (Pl., *Men.* 828–75); the tender gestures of Menaechmus I in his attempt to soothe the anger of his wife (Pl., *Men.* 626–7); the bare fist with which Pistoclerus threatens his tutor, Lydus (Pl., *Bacch.* 147); the simulated movements of Charinus and his father, Demipho, during their competition in the imaginary auction (Pl., *Mer.* 433–40). See B.-A. Taladoire, *Essai sur le comique de Plaute* (Monaco: 1956) 180–1.

[46] See Donatus on Terence's *Eun.* 2.2.1 (232): *in hac scaena non stans sed quasi ambulans persona inducitur; constitit tamen aliquantum intuens spectatores, dum secum loquitur. DI INMORTALES admirantis exclamatio est cum parasiti gesticulatione*; 2.2.43 (274): *URO HOMINEM sibi hoc gestu et vultu parasitico dicit.*

[47] The actor must adapt his voice to the part he is performing (1.11.1; 11.3.91) and to the content of his speech (1.11.12). There should be modulations in an actor's utterance (11.3.57) while his gait must be appropriate to his role (11.3.111–2). In his theatrically inspired instructions for the image of the proper orator Quintilian has a lengthy account of gestures meant to be used for the following parts of the body: head (11.3.65 ff.); glance (11.3.72 ff.); eyes (11.3.75 ff.); eyebrows (11.3.78 ff.); lips and nostrils (11.3.80 ff.); neck (11.3.82 ff.); shoulders (11.3.83–4); hands (11.3.85 ff.); fingers (11.3.92 ff.); feet (11.3.124 ff.). On the significance of body-language in Quintilian's rhetoric and the connection between declamatory gestures and theatrical performances see U. Maier-Eichhorn, *Die Gestikulation in Quintilians Rhetorik* (Frankfurt am Main: 1989) 29 ff.

Gesticulation was equally important in the Roman mime, which was a dramatic representation of low life, usually without a coherent plot. Isidore's reference (*Orig.* 18.49) to *motus corporis* 'the movements of the body' as a fundamental characteristic of the mimic theatre shows the importance of body-language and dancing in the mimes. Cicero (*De Orat.* 2.252) singles out emphasis on mimicry and exaggerated facial expressions as two of the four characteristics of mimic wit (see Introduction, section one). But, although it is made clear that the theatre of the mime emphasized mimicry more than other forms of comedy did, we do not really know what kind of movements a mimic actor or actress performed during the play, and that is so not only because mere fragments survive from the mimic plays, but mainly because the success of the performance—and consequently of the player—depended mostly on his or her talent to improvize and evoke laughter from the audience. Evidence for stage-movements and gestures may be drawn with caution from the educational instructions that Cicero (*De Orat.* 2.242, 251) and Quintilian (6.3.29) left to their students, urging them to abstain from histrionic gestures or facial expressions which could prove fatal to the result of their delivery in court and ruin their portrayal of the decent orator. These edifying critical remarks, in conjunction with implicit stage directions carefully embodied in theatrical scripts, can shed new light, I believe, on the theatrical interpretation of many scenes in Petronius' novel, and especially in the Quartilla-episode.

In this section of the novel the action takes place in three parts, according to the three different rooms which constitute the scenery of each act.

A) 16.1–21.4. A *cella* in the *deversorium* (15.8).

B) 21.5–26.3. The *proxima cella* (21.5), i.e. *the triclinium* (22.3).[48]

C) 26.3–26.6. The *cubiculum* (26.3).

If there had not been so many gaps in the text, one could have drawn many conclusions from this distribution of the action. Nevertheless, it is clear that Petronius intended to create a series of events with a startling beginning, a central part full of action, and a shocking climax. Such intention in the author's mind appears more

[48] It has been suggested, however, that the second scene of Quartilla's staged orgy takes place not at the inn but at her house: see T. Pinna, "Un' ipotesi sul rituale di Quartilla (Satyricon, XVI–XXVI)", *Annali della Facoltà di Magistero: Univ. degli Cagliari* 3 (1978), 245, n. 40.

clearly if we visualize what happens, in the shape of a pyramid, where the eye moves from a broad base towards a narrow climax. It has been rightly suggested of the author's artistic aims for the Quartilla-episode that

> Petronius has developed a telescope effect whereby the audience (spectator-reader) first takes in the scene broadly through the outside door, then more narrowly through the inside door, and finally all attention is focused through the chink in the inside door.[49]

The clues provided from the text itself show the discreet and constant attempts of the author to direct his audience's eyes towards a certain sight each time. Throughout this scene one has the strong feeling that a performance is being enacted in front of him with speech, dance, songs, comic situations, just like a Plautine comedy. This feeling becomes a certainty when one takes a closer look at each of these three parts, moving from a bigger to a smaller circle and ending up to a glimpse through a tiny hole. Stage-director is Quartilla herself. She is to be held responsible for everything, apart from the mimic interlude of the Syrian slaves (22.3–5). In fact, as the narrative will show (21.2; 21.7; 23.1; 24.4; 25.1), she is more of a director than of an actor, despite her spectacular entrance.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Encolpius-Ascyltus-Giton (already on stage, 16.1).
Enter *ancilla* (16.2–3), named perhaps Psyche (20.2).
Enter Quartilla (17.1).
Enter *virgo* (17.1), named Pannychis (25.1).
Enter *cinaedus* (21.2).
Enter *palaestritae complures* (21.4).
Tota familia (22.2): *duo Syri* (22.3), *pueri* (22.6), *tricliniarches* (22.6).
Enter *cymbalistria* (22.6).
Enter *cinaedus* (23.2).

The (theatrical) props that are mentioned are: a small rug (*lodiculam*) (20.2), two ribbons (*duas institas*) (20.4), a drug called *satyrion* (*medicamentum*) (20.6–7), a hair-pin (*acu comatoria*) (21.1), a swab (*penicillo*) (21.1), a rod made of whalebone (*ballaenaceam virgam*) (21.2), olive-oil (*oleo*) (21.5), three couches and the appropriate equipment for dinner (*tres*

[49] Schmeling 1969(a), 50.

lecti strati . . . et reliquus lautitiarum apparatus splendidissime expositus) (21.5), plenty of soot (*fuligine larga*) (22.1), oil-lamps (*lucernae*) (22.3), table with silver dishes (*mensa cum argento*) (22.4), a flask (*lagoenam*) (22.3), a cup (*poculum*) (22.4), bronze cymbals (*aera*) (22.6), a flame-coloured veil like the ones worn by Roman brides at their wedding (*flammeo*) (26.1), a wedding torch (*facem*) (26.1), and an unclean cloth (*incesta veste*) (26.1). The audience must not fail to realize, from the reference to many small objects in the above list, how well-prepared Quartilla was in order to present a theatrical orgy the way she wanted it to be.[50] Without any doubt she succeeded.

Perhaps everything had already started earlier on, when Encolpius and his companions had witnessed a ritual in the shrine of Priapus (*in sacello Priapi*) (17.8). We can only speculate on precisely what this ritual was. After all, this is not of great importance, for Quartilla's behaviour must be perceived within a context of role-playing and pretence, since the men's alleged sacrilege might have been only an excuse made up by Quartilla in order to have a lustful wake-night (*pervigilium*) with the persons to whom she took a fancy (16.4).

The audience of the novel must visualize a peaceful evening, during which Encolpius and Ascyltus enjoy supper (16.1) and take a rest after the adventure at the market-place (12.1–15.9). An aggressive knock at the door (16.1) causes panic (16.2), which becomes inability to react when the securely barred door (15.8; 16.2) opens wide on its own (16.2), like a theatrical automaton which creates an atmosphere of mystery and magic, and introduces a spectacular entrance:[51] a veiled woman,[52] the *ancilla Quartillae*, enters, 'evidently the one who had stood with the country-man a little while ago' (*illa scilicet quae paulo ante cum rustico steterat*) (16.3),[53] and in a vengeful tone declares that she is not

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[50] See Brozek 1972, 287, where he notes the theatrical, and not simply ornamental, function of the objects mentioned in Quartilla's episode.

[51] Cf. the entrance of the witches Meroe and Panthia in Apul., *Met.* 1.11.

[52] Note that both the maid and the Priapic priestess have their heads covered somehow when they enter (16.3; 17.3). It seems that the maid delivers her monologue without uncovering herself, whereas Quartilla removes the cloak off her head after she has performed her silent pantomime. The movement of revealing her head (*superbum caput*) (17.3) completely in front of her amazed audience shows her intention to keep the reactions of her victims under control, and signifies that the speaking part of her role is about to begin.

[53] See A. Aragosti—P. Cosci—A. Cotrozzi, *Petronio: l' episodio di Quartilla (Satyricon 16–26.6)* (Bologna: 1988) 48–9 for a brief summary of the scholarly dispute upon the authenticity of this parenthetical sentence. None of the conflicting views can be definitely accepted.

deceived easily (16.3): unfortunately, we cannot be certain to what precisely she refers: the theft of the cloak Encolpius and Ascyltus had tried to sell at the market-place (12.2) or the *inexpiabile scelus* (17.6) the young men had committed watching the Priapic ritual (17.8). Quartilla had evidently used the maid, a stock-character in Roman comedies,[54] not only as a means to prepare her own spectacular and highly dramatic appearance but also to create the illusion in the narrative structure that a spectacle is going to take place (namely, the speeches and gestures of both the maid and Quartilla) in front of an audience (namely, the three friends), like a performance in the theatre.

The brief monologue of the *ancilla* (16.3–4) serves as a kind of theatrical *prologus* for the ensuing events:[55] the maid introduces herself (16.3) to the double audience (i.e. Encolpius-Giton-Ascyltus and the auditor or reader of the small Neronian circle to which this novel is assumed to be addressed), gives a reason for her arrival (16.3), announces the entrance of a new *persona* on stage (16.4) using stock-comedy expressions and relevant gestures with the hands (*ecce ipsa venit*),[56] gives some pieces of information about her mistress' intentions (16.4), and makes insinuations on the sexual affairs that will follow (16.4).[57] The impact she makes is so strong that her audience is speechless (17.1). After her speech she withdraws somewhere in the room, leaving the whole stage available for Quartilla's melodramatic performance, and does not take an active part in the action until later on (18.7; 20.6). It is interesting to compare her speech with one of the genuine Plautine prologues,[58] the one in the *Trinummus*

[54] A list of maids in comedy would include: Bromia in *Amph.*, Pardalisca in *Cas.*, Halisca in *Cist.*, *Ancilla* in *Men.*, Milphidippa in. *Mil. Glor.*, Scapha in *Most.*, Sophoclidisca in *Per.*, *Ancilla* in *Poen.*, Crocotium and Stephanium in *Sti.*, Astaphium in *Truc.*, Mysis in *And.*, Phrygia in *Heaut.*, Pythias and Dorias in *Eun.* See, also, Preston 1915, 268, where he regards Chrysis, the go-between in the Circe-Polyaenos episode (*Sat.* 126 ff.), as 'perhaps the most perfectly conventional comic type in the *Satiricon.*'

[55] See Aragosti—Cosci—Cotrozzi 1988, 50.

[56] Cf. the intensely theatrical gesticulations which the adverb *ecce* suggests that Giton performed in order to make his self-sacrifice more dramatic (80.4). The frequent occurrence of *ecce* underlining the staged atmosphere of each episode (see, for example, 7.4, 40.2, 60.3, 68.4, 83.7, 97.9, 99.4, 107.6, 109.7, 114.9, 136.4).

[57] Her flattering remarks to her audience at the end of the introductory speech (16.4) (*immo potius miratur quis deus iuvenes tam urbanos in suam regionem detulerit*) are not unparalleled in theatrical prologues: see Pl., *Capt.* 67–8: *valete, iudices iustissumi / domi, duellique duellatores optumi.*

[58] See J.H. Gray, *T. Macci Plauti Trinummus* (Cambridge: 1923) xxxvii–xxxviii;

spoken by the persona of *Luxuria*. In much the same way Plautus divides the brief speech (22 lines) in similar sections: self-introduction (5–9), reason for coming and part of the plot (10–16), announcement of the entrance of new characters on stage (17), withdrawal (22). Similar observations concerning the division into parts can be made in the Prologue to the *Aulularia* where the *Lar familiaris* introduces himself (1–3), explains why he is there in relation to events of the past (3–30), explains part of the plot (31–6), and announces the entrance of the main character, Euclio, on stage (37–9); it seems, therefore, that the maid's monologue not only functions as a dramatic prologue but is conventionally composed like one.

As far as we can tell from the surviving theatrical texts, Quartilla does not seem to be a figure taken from the stage (although the type of the priestess exists: Ptolemocratia, a *Sacerdos Veneris* is included in the cast of Plautus' *Rudens*). Characteristics that had perhaps inspired Petronius to create his extraordinary priestess should be sought in historical figures of Petronius' age or in literary genres other than theatre (e.g. satire).[59] Certain aspects of her *persona*, however, are clearly theatrical.

Many elements in the description of Quartilla's actions and speech indicate so clearly the histrionic behaviour she adopts, that the hypocrisy of the expression of her feelings is beyond doubt. However, only after a considerable period of time do Encolpius, Ascyltus, and Giton find out that she was acting a role. Quartilla gives a convincing performance, and thus succeeds in maintaining suspense and verisimilitude in her scenario. The situation is strikingly similar to the one presented by Pardalisca in Plautus' *Casina* 621–715: Cleustrata and Myrrhina have instructed her to say that Casina has gone crazy and that she has a knife with which she threatens to kill anyone who approaches her. Pardalisca, like Quartilla, acts her part brilliantly, she looks *timida* and *exanimata* (630), she is deliberately unwilling to speak (653–69), she trembles (622) and shouts (627); nevertheless, none of her multiple audiences (i.e. the old man Lysidamus, the actual audience of the performance, and we as modern readers of the text) realizes that everything was staged in advance until Pardalisca herself, like Quartilla, says so (685–8).[60]

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cf. F. Hornstein, "Die Echtheitsfrage der Plautinischen Prologe", *Wiener Studien* 36 (1914), 104–21.

[59] See Walsh 1970, 89–90 and Currie 1989, 330.

[60] For similarly constructed 'play-within-a-play' scenes in Plautus see Slater 1985,

Like an *archimima* in her own production of a mimic play, Quartilla dominates the scene with her presence. Accompanied by a girl and not showing her face by having her head covered (17.3), she enters and makes a long pause,[61] during which tears designed on purpose fall like rain (17.3).[62] The dramatic aspect of her lengthy monologue (17.4–9) is underlined by the fact that the narrator prefers to report it in direct speech while he chooses to express his emotional confusion in indirect speech (18.2–3). Quartilla's mood changes rapidly:[63] (17.1) *diu flevit*; (17.2) *lacrimas ad ostentationem doloris paratas*; (17.3) *ut ergo tam ambitiosus detumuit imber*; (18.1) *lacrimas rursus effudit gemitibusque largis concussa*; (18.4) *hilarior . . . facta mulier . . . ex lacrimis in risum mota*; (18.7) *complosis deinde manibus in tantum repente risum effusa est*; (19.1) *omnia mimico risu exsonuerant*), and this change reaches its climax at the *mimicus risus* (19.1), a dominant characteristic of the scene (18.4; 18.7; 19.1; 20.6; 20.7; 20.8; 24.5; 25.1) and a 'leit-motif' in the novel.[64] This laughter was usually the only aim of mimic performances (J. Lydus, *De Magistr.* 1.40) and a proof that what was happening on stage was mere pretence with no serious purposes (Chor., *Apol. Mim.* 30).[65] In connection with the mimic laughter, gestures with the hands have a

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48–9, 88 ff., 136–40, 162–5; and in Petronius see C. Gill, "The Sexual Episodes in the *Satyricon*", *Classical Philology* 68 (1973), 179–80.

[61] On theatrically inspired rhetorical pauses and the gestures employed to accompany them see Quint., 11.3.158: *in hac cunctatione sunt quaedam non indecentes, ut appellant scenici, morae, caput mulcere, manum intueri, infringere articulos, simulare conatum, suspiratione sollicitudinem fateri, aut quod quemque magis decet, eaque diutius, si iudex nondum intendet animum.* Quartilla's pause falls in the same category of deliberate acting-techniques.

[62] The same theatrical behaviour was exhibited by Giton at 9.2: *consedit puer super lectum et manantes lacrimas pollice extersit*; by means of false decency and pseudo-reluctance to narrate what happened, Giton achieves to make Encolpius' anger against Ascyltus grow more violent. See Publ. Syrus, *Sent.* 130: *Didicere feminae flere ad mendacium.* The same idea is expressed for Chrysanthus' wife at 42.6–7. False tears were frequently used in Roman comedies as part of the slave's scheme to deceive the pimp or the soldier: both Palaestrio and Philocomasium pretend to cry when they bid farewell to Pyrgopolynices (Pl., *Mil. Glor.*, 1311 ff., 1324 ff., 1328, 1342–3); Toxilus advises Saturio to instruct his daughter to cry in front of Dordalus to show that she remembers nostalgically her alleged past (Pl., *Per.* 152, 620–3, 656). Parmeno mentions a *falsa lacrimula* which Thais will produce by rubbing her eyes, as one of her powerful means to change Phaedria's disposition towards her (Ter., *Eun.* 67 ff.).

[63] On the extreme transitions and the comic effect of Quartilla's mood see Cèbe 1966, 214.

[64] See M. Korn—S. Reitzer, *Concordantia Petroniana. Computer Konkordanz zu den Satyrica des Petron* (Hildesheim / Zürich / New York: 1986) s.v. *rideo*, *risus*; cf. Callebat 1967, 290–4.

[65] See Introduction, n. 7. There is a useful discussion in Aragosti—Cosci—Cotrozzi 1988, 70, on the comparison between the *mimicus risus*, as it is described in the Petronian episode, and the ceremony of the *Deus Risus*, as it is presented in the

similar significant function for the ensuing acting: both Quartilla and her household (the maid, the little girl and the sodomite) clap their hands or crack the joints of their fingers (17.3; 18.7; 20.6; 23.2; 24.2);[66] the abruptness of these gestures is occasionally enhanced by a contrived laughter which has an even stronger impact on the audience (18.7; 20.6).[67] These exaggerated movements create an additional tone of cheap melodrama and underline the theatrical behaviour of the characters, since *complodere manus scaenicum est et pectus caedere* 'to clap the hands and beat the breast are tricks of the stage'.[68]

If one reads the Quartilla-scene as the narrative equivalent of a three-scene farcical stage-piece, it is surprising to find how well everything fits in the pattern of an obscene mime which consists of dance and songs, premeditated gestures and explosive laughter, sex and violence. The direct and indirect speeches in the text serve as the mimic script itself,[69] while the narrator's descriptions of both the persons' psychological reactions and the actions which are carried out by Quartilla's co-operators replace the visual element and stage-directions of the mimic performance.[70] A theatrical rendering of the surviving, though fragmentary, text (16.1–20.1) would be as follows:

Encolpius (startled): *Quis es?*
Ancilla (sharply): *Aperi, iam scies.*
(The *siparium* is being drawn aside and lets an actress enter on stage).[71]

Apuleian novel (*Met.* 3.1–11). Moering 1915, 9 puts forth a far-fetched theory against the *mimicus risus* as the laughter of a mimic actor.

[66] Quintilian (11.3.158) classifies the movement of *infringere articulos* as a theatrical gesticulation.

[67] Preston 1915, 261 considers the theatricality of the *risus*-motif in connection with the *plausus*-motif and the repetitive combination of both (i.e. *risus* and *plausus*) in the novel. Sandy 1974, 339 refers rightly to the *mimicus risus* as 'a studied type of laughter, perhaps stridently aggressive, possibly like that of the *moecha* in Cat. 42.' On Catullus' passage see W. Kroll, *C. Valerius Catullus* (Stuttgart: 1959; Fotomechanischer Nachdruck der 2. Auflage von 1929) 78.

[68] Quint., 11.3.123. See Maier-Eichhorn 1989, 134–5.

[69] See 16.2–4; 17.4–9; 18.2–3; 18.5–6; 19.2; 20.1; 20.5–7; 21.2–3; 21.7; 23.1; 23.3; 24.1–4; 24.6–7; 25.1; 25.3–6.

[70] See 16.1; 16.2; 17.1–3; 18.1–2; 18.4; 18.7–19.1; 19.3–6; 20.2–4; 20.7; 20.8–21.2; 21.4–7; 22.1–23.2; 23.4–5; 24.1–2; 24.4–7; 25.1–3; 25.7–26.6.

[71] This curtain, which the mimes used as the background of their performances, serves as a door in the Μοιχεύτρια-mime 43 (Page).

Anc.: *me derisisse vos putabatis? ego sum ancilla Quartillae, cuius vos sacrum ante cryptam turbastis.* (Dramatic pause and gesture towards the door) *ecce ipsa venit ad stabulum petitque ut vobiscum loqui liceat.* (The three male characters on stage feel frightened, perhaps they stand up and show their intention to escape) *nolite perturbari.* (They stop moving) *nec accusat errorem vestrum nec punit,* (the maid changes the tone of her voice from a threatening to a mild one) *immo potius miratur quis deus iuvenes tam urbanos in suam regionem detulerit.*

Quartilla: (Improvisations on tragic gestures and dramatic movements) (aggressive style)[72] *Quaenam est haec audacia, aut ubi fabulas*[73] *etiam antecessura latrocinia didicistis? misereor mediusfidius vestri; neque enim impune quisquam quod non licuit aspexit.* (authoritative style) *utique nostra regio tam praesentibus plena est numinibus ut facilius possis deum quam hominem invenire.* (condescending style) *ac ne me putetis ultionis causa huc venisse, aetate magis vestra commoveor quam iniuria mea. imprudentes enim,* (emphatically) *ut puto, admisistis inexpiabile scelus.* (sad and suffering tone) *ipsa quidem illa nocte vexata tam periculoso inhorrui frigore ut tertianae etiam impetum timeam. et ideo medicinam somnio petii iussaque sum vos perquirere atque impetum morbi monstrata subtilitate lenire.* (melodramatic tone) *sed de remedio non tam valde laboro; maior enim in praecordiis dolor saevit, qui me usque ad necessitatem mortis deducit, ne scilicet iuvenili impulsi licentia quod in sacello Priapi vidistis vulgetis deorumque consilia proferatis in populum.* (supplicatory tone and gestures) *protendo igitur ad genua vestra supinas manus petoque et oro ne nocturnas religiones iocum risumque faciatis neve traducere velitis tot annorum secreta, quae vix tres homines noverunt* (repetition of tragic improvisations).

Enc. (upset): *bonum animum habeas et de utroque secura sis: nam neque sacra quisquam vulgabit et si quod praeterea aliud remedium ad tertianam*

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[72] The different parts of her speech enable Quartilla to change the tone of her voice according to the context of her monologue and to use different modulations in her utterance: see Quint., 1.11.12: *Debet etiam docere comoedus, quomodo narrandum, qua sit auctoritate suadendum, qua concitatione consurgat ira, qui flexus deceat miserationem*; 11.3.57: *Quid enim minus oratori convenit quam modulatio scenica et nonnunquam ebriorum aut comissantium licentiae similis?* In a similarly erotic context Circe offers herself to Encolpius / Polyaenus, and modulates her voice to her gestures (*digitis gubernantibus vocem*, 127.1).

[73] In the context of Quartilla's role-playing within an improvised scenario, her reference to *fabulas* (17.4) echoes similar references, which actors in Roman comedies make to the play itself during the performance (Pl., *Merc.* 1007; *Pseud.* 338, 564). Slater 1990(b), 43 observes that 'Quartilla's first words cast Encolpius and Ascyltus in the roles of robbers and pirates of the Greek romances.' On *fabula* as 'a piece of play-acting' see *OLD*, s.v., 6b; G. Lodge, *Lexicon Plautinum* I (Lipsiae: 1909–1929) s.v., II.2.

deus tibi monstraverit, adiuvabimus divinam prudentiam vel periculo nostro (perhaps he performs some gestures to show that he is making a formal oath).[74]

Quart. (change of mood, and gestures): *facio indutias vobiscum et a constituta lite dimitto. quod si non adnuissetis de hac medicina quam peto,* (threatening tone) *iam parata erat in crastinum turba quae et iniuriam meam vindicaret et dignitatem:* (in a triumphant voice)[75]

contemni turpe est, legem donare superbum:
hoc amo, quod possum qua libet ire via.
nam sane et sapiens contemptus iurgia nectit,
et qui non iugulat, victor abire solet.

(More theatrical gestures and the mimic laughter. The heroes are at a loss. Quartilla continues in the same tone as before) *ideo vetui hodie in hoc deversorio quemquam mortalium admitti, ut remedium tertianae sine ulla interpellatione a vobis acciperem.*

The frequent textual gaps which occur in the following passages do not allow further theatrical reconstruction of the ensuing incidents. Apparently, a kind of ritual takes place during which sexual stimulation (20.2), tying of the hands and feet (20.4),[76] aphrodisiac drinks (20.6–7),[77] slight tortures (21.1), and kisses (20.8) are comically used as means of punishment. Description of events and conversation in indirect speech seem to prevail over direct speeches which are hereafter confined to brief exchanges of witty dialogue (20.5–7; 24.1–4; 24.6–7; 25.3–6). Additional difficulties are presented for the proper

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[74] On short gestures to express vow, wonder, and interrogation see Quint., 11.3.100–1.

[75] Quartilla sings a song in the prosimetric tradition of mimic plays; see R. Astbury, "Petronius, *P. Oxy.* 3010, and Menippean satire", *Classical Philology* 72 (1977), 30–1, n. 41; cf. the song of the *cinaedus* at 23.3 and the song of the barbarians in the prosimetric Χαρίτιον-mime, 95–8 (Page).

[76] On the significance of the details in this procedure as elements denoting the initiation in a Priapic ritual see Cosci, "Quartilla e l' iniziazione ai misteri di Priapo (*Satyricon* 20.4)", *Materiali e Discussioni per l' analisi dei testi classici* 4 (1980), 199–201. On the other hand, Pinna 1978, 223–38 considers Quartilla's rites as a parody of religious ceremonies in honour of Dionysus and other deities of Oriental origin.

[77] The drink (we know only of sleeping drugs and not of aphrodisiacs used in mime-performances; see Kehoe 1984, 103, n. 33) is introduced *iam deficiente fabularum contextu* (20.5), a peculiar phrase which, according to Sandy 1974, 340, may have theatrical associations: 'Because the immediate context is lacunose, it is impossible to determine whether the expression means 'because the conversation was flagging', as at 37.1, or whether *fabulae* here mean 'play-acting', as at 95.1.' Slater 1990(b), 44 cites Sage and Gilleland who interpret the same phrase as a reference to obscene mimes that have just been performed.

evaluation of the text from a theatrical point of view, if we take into account the speculation that the usual practice of the scribe was to abbreviate events in a book, once he had got the flavour of each new episode.[78] However, as is apparent from the dramatic reading of 16.1–20.1, Quartilla, like a leading actress in a mime-company, has an excellent role to perform, and Petronius seems to have portrayed her character keeping constantly in mind the visual techniques of dramatic performances.

At the beginning of her speech Quartilla mentions, among other things, that the divinity, whose ceremony the three *fratres* had witnessed *ante cryptam* (16.3) was Priapus (17.8). Perhaps this was the original cause for the famous *ira Priapi* towards the hero. The wrath of Priapus, which is shown repeatedly in many love-moments through Encolpius' impotence (20.2; 128.2; 132.2; 140.11), is said to have been the main link which connected the adventures of Encolpius and his friends in different places.[79] The extant use of the Priapic figure in different literary genres makes it impossible to assert the inspiration for Petronius.[80] Augustine, *De Civit. Dei* 6.7 speaks of a Priapus-mime and of the procession of this god's statue in the theatres:

> *Numquid Priapo mimi, non etiam sacerdotes enormia pudenda fecerunt? An aliter stat adorandus in locis sacris quam procedit ridendus in theatris?*
> Is it not the case that mime-actors, but also priests, have portrayed Priapus with an enormous phallus? Or does his statue stand to be

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[78] See Sullivan 1968(a), 37.

[79] For a general survey of the role of Priapus in the Satyrica see Pinna 1978, 215–20. Schmeling 1971, 350–7 has a good analysis of the function of the *gravis ira Priapi*—motif in the novel, although his main focus is only the *exclusus-amator* poetry. Against the *Ira Priapi* as a basic plot motif see Baldwin, "*Ira Priapi*", *Classical Philology* 68 (1973), 294–6. Coffey 1976, 185 accepts the existence of the motif with reservations, because, according to him, it does not justify adequately the theory of the parody of epic in the whole novel. Preston 1915, 266 regards the Wrath of Priapus as 'a parody of a sort that was familiar to the mime and intimately connected with the phallic element therein.' R. Beck, "Some observations on the narrative technique of Petronius", *Phoenix* 27 (1973), 55, n. 17 is sceptical about the subject: "Strictly speaking, all that we are entitled to claim is, I believe, (a) that Encolpius, the protagonist, a character whom we know to be hopelessly prone to fantasy and melodrama, *imagines himself on certain occasions* to be the victim of the anger of Priapus, and (b) that these imaginings are understandable in view of (i) the nature of his ailment at Croton (i.e. impotence) and (ii) his occasional entanglements with people such as Quartilla who are genuinely connected with the cult of Priapus."

[80] See E.M. o' Connor, *Symbolum Salacitatis. A Study of the God Priapus as a Literary Character* (Frankfurt am Main: 1989) 23–38.

worshipped in sacred grounds, differently than it moves forward to be laughed at in the theatres?[81]

This testimony, however, is not enough to assume that Quartilla's orgy comes directly from this source. Moreover, the scarcity of actual mime-texts (the Priapus-mime has not survived) does not allow us to draw any definite conclusions, as far as the content of this mime is concerned, apart perhaps from the fact that it must have been very obscene. But although Petronius might have introduced the phallic god in his novel under the influence of a non-theatrical genre, he elaborated on it and presented it as a *spectaculum* (26.5).

Quartilla's dream (17.7) is the first instance in the surviving text of the occurrence of the dream-motif, and must be considered within the theatrical frame of her risible *incubatio*: it is amusing to imagine the libidinous Quartilla playing the part of a pious priestess, who seeks help through this ritual.[82] It is worth noting that, although she makes so much fuss about the divine origin of her plans, she nowhere states clearly where she went for advice or which god appeared in her dream and sent her after Encolpius. It seems, therefore, that the employment of this practice by the author lacks any serious intentions, and that it functions as part of the theatrical game that Quartilla has organized at the expense of the three young men. This kind of dream can be paralleled with another false dream, which also forms a part of a staged deceit, only this time it is at the expense of a pompous soldier. In Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* (381–92), Sceledrus, the slave of the soldier Pyrgopolynices, sees Philocomasium, the courtesan, who is kept against her will as the girlfriend of the soldier, embracing and kissing with her beloved Pleusicles. Palaestrio,

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[81] This is the main piece of evidence for the existence of a mime with such a theme. H. Herter, *De Priapo* in *Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten* 23, ed. L. Malten—O. Weinreich (Giessen: 1932) 228 provides a short bibliographical list on the subject. T.P. Wiseman, *Catullus and his world. A reappraisal* (Cambridge Univ. Press: 1985) 194 draws attention to Priapus' presence in the prologue of a *fabula togata* by Afranius, and speculates that the two Priapus-stories which Ovid has incorporated in his *Fasti* (1.391–440, 6.319–48) may have been derived from stage-productions of Priapus-mimes.

[82] The most recent discussion on Quartilla's *incubatio* is P. Kragelund, "Epicurus, Priapus and the dreams in Petronius", *Classical Quarterly* 39 (1989), 445–6. He evaluates this dream in the general context of dreams and their function in Petronius, and rightly comments on the ironical employment of the motif that 'Quartilla has a clear motive for talking so much of her dream: the god's command entitled her to demand what she so ardently wished.' (p. 446). This practice can be used as a source of comic situations: in Plautus' *Curc.* 61–2, Cappadox, the pimp, suffers from hepatitis and goes to sleep in the shrine of Asclepius.

the cunning slave, in order to deceive Sceledrus and hide the truth from Pyrgopolynices, tells him that the person he saw kissing the young man was not Philocomasium but her twin sister. At that moment Philocomasium exits and, instructed by Palaestrio, narrates a false dream: her mother and her sister with her lover have arrived in the same town and stay at the house next door. But her joy does not last for long because a slave accuses her unjustly of having an affair secretly from her master. In both cases the purpose of the dream is to convince and deceive at the same time. In both cases, the trick works.

It is worth adding some brief remarks on the ensuing action, which round off the theatrical interpretation of the earlier events. Another calamity appears for Encolpius with the arrival of a new *persona* on stage: the mimic *cinaedus*.[83] Quartilla uses this grotesque figure to titillate Encolpius both at 21.2 and 23.4–5, but in both instances disgust (21.2; 23.2,4,5) and tears (24.1) rather than excitement is Encolpius' response. A similar kind of invasion is depicted on a Megarian (or Homeric) bowl of the late fourth or the early third century B.C.[84] The scene is a flour mill where the μυλωθροὶ and the donkey of the mill are shown to be engaged each in their own task, when five κίναιδοι intrude and destroy with their mischief the peaceful atmosphere. All of them wear loin-cloths and have on their heads the *pilus*, the pointed hat, so characteristic of a mime-actor.[85] Two of them are trying to hit with clubs the employees in the mill, one attempts to carry off a bag, one stimulates sexually the donkey, one is tied on to a pole about to be flogged by the τιμωρός, whereas the last one runs to the rescue. The bowl is believed to illustrate a scene from a mime, in which κίναιδοι played an important part. This, however, does not necessarily mean that Petronius used them in this scene bearing in his mind their theatrical importance, for effeminacy

[83] On the prominence of the κίναιδος in mimes see Sandy 1974, 340, n. 25; and in pantomimes see M. Kokolakis, "Pantomimus and the treatise Περὶ Ὀρχήσεως (*De Saltatione*)", *Platon* 10 (1959), 14–6. Cf. Non. 5.16: *cinaedi dicti sunt apud veteres saltatores vel pantomimi,* ἀπὸ τοῦ κ[ε]ινεῖν σῶμα.

[84] Discussion upon the mimic dimensions of the scene on the bowl was originally made by M. Rostovtzeff, "Two Homeric Bowls in the Louvre", *American Journal of Archaeology* 41 (1937), 86–90. Sandy 1974, 340 was the first who pointed out the similarities of that scene with the 'invasion' of the κίναιδοι in the Quartilla-episode. Slater 1990(b), 44, n. 20 refers to K. Weitzmann, *Ancient Book Illumination* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1959) 87–9 for a discussion on the pictorial evidence for such mime-performances.

[85] See Nicoll 1931, 79, fig. 77; 88, fig. 81; 89, fig. 82.

was a usual target of satire, as well,[86] a genre which shares many features with Petronius' novel. The significant difference, though, is that, what the author might have taken from satire, he used in a mimic context. More specifically, the narrator takes care to describe the sodomites with funny details in their outfit (*myrtea gausapa*, *cingulo succinctus*) (21.2) and make-up (23.5) to look like caricatures taken from a farcical piece.[87] One of them is used as a kind of chorus who sings an obscene *canticum* (23.3) with the musical accompaniment of the *cymbalistria* (23.1), while later on he plays the rider to Encolpius' and Ascyltus' horses.[88] Finally, the strange pun on the origin of the word *embasicoetas* meaning both a drinking mug and a sodomite (24.1–4), is verbal wit in the tradition of Plautine or mimic jokes, in which a word with two different meanings is understood differently by two speakers or by one speaker and the audience.[89]

During the rest of the 'ceremony' which takes place after the participants have had plenty of food and drink (21.6), two Syrian slaves attempt to steal the valuable objects in the room (22.3–5). They quarrel in the division of the loot and from the noise they wake up the others who were sleeping. In order to save themselves, they lie down and pretend not only to have been sleeping for a long time, but also to snore, so that the whole deception would look more natural. This brief incident is interesting from a theatrical point of view, because it exhibits the features that a mime-piece with such a theme would present:[90] it does not last for a long time, it has a lot of slapstick elements (the greedy quarrel over the silver, 22.3; the fall of the large

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[86] See N. Rudd, *Themes in Roman Satire* (Duckworth: 1986) 215–25.

[87] The image of thick make-up presented as a wall, which is being peeled by falling rain, is strikingly similar to a metaphorical expression in a fragment of a *comoedia togata*: see Afranius, *Augur* 5 (16) and A. Daviault, *Comoedia Togata—Fragments* (Paris: 1981) 146. On the comic aspects of the sodomites' appearance and movements see Gagliardi 1980, 56–7.

[88] For indecent songs in the mimes see Quint., 1.2.8: *omne convivium obscenis canticis strepit*; Chor., *Apol. Mim.* 130: αἰσχρῶν γὰρ ᾀσμάτων ἀκρόασις—μίμοις δὲ ταῦτα σύνηθες ᾄδειν. Note that the contribution of the girl with the cymbals may have been a vocal one: see Bücheler's conjecture at 23.1: *adiuvit hilaritatem comissantis cymbalistria<e cantus>*. On horse-play as source of visual comic effect on stage cf. Pl., *Asin.* 698–710 (the slave Libanus plays the rider to his master's, Argyrippus, horse).

[89] See Pl., *Men.* 49, 263–4; *Bacch.* 309–11, 731–2; V. Castellani, "Plautus versus komoidia: popular farce at Rome", *Themes in Drama* 10 (1988), 67. For mimic word-plays see Capitolinus, *Marcus Antoninus* 19.2; Suet., *Aug.* 68; Nicoll 1931, 124–6; A. Marzullo, "Il mimo latino nei motivi di attualità", *Atti e Mem. Accad. di Scienze, Lett. e Arti di Modena* 16 (1958), 90–1; Sullivan 1968(a), 225–8. Cf. Trimalchio's *hoc est ius cenae* (35.7), *Carpe, carpe* (36.7), and ch. three, n. 50.

[90] See the brief discussion of the anecdote in Gagliardi 1980, 55–6.

jug, the table and the cup one after the other, 22.3–4; the blow on the head of one maid by a flying cup, 22.4) and a funny ending (22.5).[91] Slaves from Syria had become stage-figures because of their cunning minds and their greediness,[92] while persons being drunk (22.4) could provide a laughable sight on stage.[93]

The mock-marriage between seven-year-old Pannychis and sixteen-year-old Giton (25.1–2), which was originally suggested by Psyche and duly organized by Quartilla, constitutes the climax of the ritual orgy: there is applause everywhere (25.3), as if a crowd in the amphitheatre were showing its approval of a *spectaculum* (26.5) in the arena. Encolpius becomes suddenly a moralist and strongly disagrees with the idea by putting forth as arguments the true modesty of Giton's character (!) and the tender age of Pannychis (25.3). His objections are overruled by Quartilla who claims that she does not remember herself ever being a virgin (25.4–5), and strengthens her view with the proverb *posse taurum tollere, qui vitulum sustulerit* 'anyone who carried a calf, can carry a bull' (25.6). Use of sayings of popular wisdom is not unparalleled in the low farcical theatre, as well as in other non-theatrical genres.[94] But in this case the employment of the motif is made in a distorted manner, since it is used to justify a

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[91] Preston 1915, 262 regards the recurrent motif of the breaking of dishes (cf. 64.10; 70.5) a source of comic effect in Petronius. Aragosti—Cosci—Cotrozzi 1988, 93 compare the pretended snoring of the thieves with the snoring of the husband, who pretends to be fast asleep, while his wife commits adultery (Juv., 1.57). The Pergamene boy started snoring, as well, in order to advance the fulfilment of Eumolpus' prayers (*Sat.* 85.6). In *Philogelos*, a collection of jokes whose one possible author might have been the mimographer Philistion, the following joke, which exhibits strong similarities with the brief sketch of the Syrian slaves, is recorded: "An egghead who was sleeping with his father stood up on the bed in the night and began to eat the grapes which were hanging overhead. But no sooner had he stood up than his father flashed a lamp at him that he had hidden in a pot. Caught *in flagrante delicto*, the egghead froze on his feet and pretended to be asleep by snoring." Translation by Baldwin 1983, 8–9.

[92] See the character of the resourceful Syros in Ter., *Heaut.*; *Ad.* A *fabula Atellana*, under the title *Syri*, probably presented similar situations: see Pomp., 168–9 (Frassin.) and cf. Frassinetti 1967, 108.

[93] See Pl., *Most.* 319 ff.; *Pseud.* 1246 ff.; Laber., *Aulularia* 10; *Hetaera* 52. The drunkenness-motif will be a continuous source of laughter and theatrical surprises in the *Sat.*: Quartilla's chorus-women, 26.1; Trimalchio, 52.8, 73.3, 78.5; Habinnas, 65.7; Encolpius, 72.7, 79.2, 79.9; the slaves who pretend to quarrel, 70.6; the inhabitants at the inn, 95.7, 96.5. See Preston 1915, 264.

[94] See Rosenblüth 1909, 40 ff. and, on this particular proverb, O. Rossbach, "Schediasma criticum", *Rheinisches Museum* 46 (1891), 311. Moering 1915, 21–30 gives an extant list of proverbs in non-theatrical texts arguing that Petronius' use of proverbs is due not to the mimes but to the *fictae fabulae* (p. 22).

ridiculous and extreme act of perversion. Although attention has been drawn to the close similarities between this scene and contemporary events in Neronian Rome,[95] or disgusting details of Priapic rituals,[96] a consensus seems to emerge that Petronius' inspiration for this scene was the theatre of the mimes, which used the pseudo-marriage-motif as one of its themes. The title *Nuptiae* occurs in a mime by Laberius and in a *fabula Atellana* by L. Pomponius, perhaps as an adaptation of a New Comedy theme.[97] Finally, there are the testimonies of the Elder Seneca (*Contr.* 2.4.5) who refers to the relationship of a man with a prostitute as *vere mimicae nuptiae* <*in*> *quibus ante in cubiculum rivalis venit quam maritus* 'indeed, a farcical marriage, since he had gone in her bedroom as a rival in love before he went as her husband', and of pseudo-Quintilian, who uses the theatrical theme within a rhetorical context:

> *ecquid semoto illo nuptiarum mimo atque inani tantummodo nomine virum esse cogitatis et dignum, qui abdicetur, quod hominem non occiderit?*
> surely, if you exclude that farce of a marriage and its mere title, do you regard him as a man who deserves to be disinherited, on the grounds that he did not kill the person?[98]

[95] Walsh 1970, 91 notes that Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.37.9) describes with almost exact words the marriage between Nero and Pythagoras, which took place a few years before the supposed composition of the novel. This interpretation fits well in the pattern of Petronian satire which may have covered allusions to contemporary events under narrative fiction; this would have been an amusing comparison for the small Neronian circle who would have understood the joke. On the Tacitean passage see W. Allen, JR., "Nero's eccentricities before the fire (Tac. *Ann.* 15.37)", *Numen* 9 (1962), 104–7; E. Koestermann, *Cornelius Tacitus. Annalen (Band IV. Buch 14–16)* (Heidelberg: 1968) 232–4.

[96] Schmeling 1971, 347 suggests that Giton is forced by Quartilla to play the part of the *fascinum Priapi*, a stone-image of the phallic god, on to which, according to the Priapic ritual (August., *De Civit. Dei* 4.11, 6.9), the wife should sit and be penetrated before her husband's arrival on the first night of their wedding. Although one has to stress the facts in order to find exact similarities between the two events, this theory has the advantage of considering the marriage-incident as an integral part of the Priapic religion, which Quartilla is supposed to have been practising upon the three companions from the beginning of the scene. On the other hand, it does not exclude any of the previous suggestions, but rather encourages more speculations: for example, is this what Augustine meant when he referred to the Priapus-mime (*De Civit. Dei* 6.7), or what was enacted in Laberius' theatrical *Nuptiae*? If so, how can one be sure that Petronius took the motif directly from the ritual and not from a presentation of it on stage? The question remains open.

[97] See Laber., *Nuptiae* 82 (Bonaria) and cf. Bonaria 1968, 117–8; Pomp., *Nuptiae* 82 (Frassinetti). See, also, Rosenblüth 1909, 53; Sandy 1974, 340, n. 24.

[98] See [Quint.], *Decl.* 279.17, p. 139.21 (Ritter).

The few lines that have survived from these theatrical texts are not enough to show exact similarities with the marriage in the Quartilla-scene, apart from the probability that a wedding-ceremony took place on stage. One must also keep in mind that Giton's marriage has not been organized as entertainment for its own sake but as the climactic part of a pseudo-religious ceremony, an element absent from the theatrical *testimonia*. On the other hand, what seems to me to argue strongly for the theatrical inspiration of the scene is the risible gap in the narrative plot between illusion and reality, a favourite motif in the farcical comedy and the mimes. What really impresses the auditor or reader in the description of the 'marriage' is the care that has been taken to represent a traditional Roman marriage.[99] Pannychis' head is covered with a flame-coloured veil, there is a leading torch and a long procession towards the bridal chamber which is already decorated appropriately. This impression of chastity, conveyed by the traditional Roman elements in the ceremony, is undermined by many details: the bearer of the torch is a κίναιδος (26.1), the procession consists of drunken women (26.1) who make obscene jokes (26.2), the bedroom is decorated with an unchaste cloth (26.1), the bride is only a seven-year-old girl (25.2). The comic effect is similar to the one created in Plautus' *Casina* during the mock-marriage of Chalinus (pretending to be Casina) and Olympio (together with Lysidamus): Olympio is dressed like a bridegroom (767–768), a pipe-player is invited to play the music for the wedding-song while Olympio and Lysidamus sing the appropriate hymn (798–800), they bear a wedding-torch (840), Pardalisca gives, in a comic manner, traditional advice and wishes to the new bride (815–34), but the tender bride turns out to be the rough Chalinus (840–54, 875 ff.). In both texts the propriety of the ritual is undermined by fundamental irregularities in its details, and it is this contrast—favoured by Petronius, as one may judge from Eumolpus' pseudo-ritual at 140.5—that generates partly the theatrical dimension of the scene.

Much to Encolpius' disappointment, Giton seemed not to resist the girl, nor was the girl frightened at the prospect of the ensuing 'matrimony' (26.3). What follows has been the cause for much scholarly dispute. Quartilla and Encolpius stay outside the wedding-room (*ante limen thalami*) (26.4) and through a hole they watch the childish

[99] See S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the time of Cicero to the time of Ulpian* (Oxford: 1991) 161–70.

sports (*lusumque puerilem*) (26.4) which are described as *spectaculum* (26.5). Giton and Pannychis are the first show, Quartilla (who is also the creator of the scene) and Encolpius are the first audience, while all of them constitute the second show for the auditor or reader of the novel. The structure of the episode after the pattern of a 'play-within-a-play' scene seems to be Petronius' favourite technique to frame sexual incidents in the narrative.[100] The aim of this device is to remind constantly the auditors or readers that they are watching something enacted on stage, and that everything in front of them should be seen as a play and are not to be taken seriously.

Opportunities for the delivery of speeches or the execution of actions in a histrionic manner are not confined to the description of Quartilla's staged orgy but are effectively exploited in other parts of the novel, when the narrator describes his visually stunning experience at Trimalchio's feast[101] or when he recounts his melodramatic love-sufferings in his relationship with the unfaithful Giton and his occasional rivals Ascyltus or Eumolpus (79.1–82.6; 92.1–99.4). The importance of the visual dimension that the narrator gives in the narrative structure of his past experiences argues for the strong influence that forms of staged entertainment exerted on the composition of the *Satyrica*, and points out to oral delivery, rather than silent reading, as the most probable way through which this novel was made known to Petronius' contemporaries.

This theatrical interpretation of the Quartilla-scene is more likely than an approach according to the spirit of the elegiac poetry[102] (although the former does not necessarily exclude the latter), because it takes into account the role-playing throughout the novel. What must be rebutted, though, is the possibility that Petronius was applying his

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[100] Cf. 140.11 (Eumolpus' intercourse with Philomela's daughter), 92.6–12 (Eumolpus' happenings at the baths), 96.1 (the fracas at the inn between Eumolpus and the lodgers). The topic has been successfully analysed by Gill 1973, 179: "In a number of sexual incidents the same structure of actors-performance-audience is created, with the characters in the story acting as surrogates for author and audience. While some of the characters enact a parody of a normal sexual act—and themselves relish the comic and aesthetic aspects of what they are doing—others serve as the appreciative audience of those parodies".

[101] See Z. Beran, "The realm of sensory perception and its significance in Petronius' *Satyricon*", *Živa Antika* 23 (1973), 227–51; G. Rosati, "Trimalchione in scena", *Maia* 35 (1983), 213–27; C.P. Jones, "Dinner Theater", in *Dining in a Classical Context*, ed. W.J. Slater (The University of Michigan Press: 1991) 185–98.

[102] See Schmeling 1971, 338–9, 346–7, 349, 350.

own sexual preferences in his novel.[103] The author of the novel was a person who wanted to shock and amuse at the same time. For this reason he built the base of his work upon a tradition that was mostly obscene, the low kind of theatre.[104]

[103] Sullivan 1963, 78–82 explains the gross amounts of sexual elements in the *Satyrica* as a product of the decadent and depraved society Petronius lived in. He claims that the obscene sections 'would all titillate the tastes of the circle, much as gossip about the sexual activities of the Emperor was interesting to Petronius (Tac., *Ann.* 16.19).' (p. 78).

[104] Anderson 1982, 151, n. 27 compares the amoral obscenity of the *Satyrica* with the more obscene mimes by Herodas (2, 5, 6, 7) and notes that 'it would be absurd to suggest that the clever and eloquent brothel-keeper of II was intended as any kind of satire on moral hypocrisy, any more than that his counterpart in *Apollonius of Tyre* was meant as an attack on immorality.'

CHAPTER THREE

SPECTACULUM TRIMALCHIONIS

The story of Trimalchio's dinner-party has been transmitted to our age in a more complete condition than the fragmentary state of the rest of the surviving novel. This has focused the attention of the majority of scholars on that part of the *Satyrica* more than on any other episode in the long series of adventures that befell Encolpius and his companions. Numerous explicit and implicit references to theatre are made during the feast and most of them have already been noted and analysed separately by Petronian scholars.[1] No systematic attempt, however, has been made yet to read this section of the novel from a theatrical point of view gathering all the relevant bibliographical remarks and considering this obviously staged dinner in relation to the other dramatically presented incidents in the novel. The present chapter aims to fill this scholarly gap in Petronian studies.

When the three hustlers, namely Encolpius, his lover Giton, and his ex-boyfriend Ascyltus, hear from Agamemnon's slave that they are invited to dinner on the same day at Trimalchio's (26.9), the audience of the novel and today's readers reasonably assume that they will confront themselves once more with an ironic tirade of a satirist against the conventional image of a vulgar nouveau-riche and his environment in the usual hackneyed manner established by so many writers before Petronius.[2] Even before the beginning of the actual feast, however, the element of theatricality will make its presence quite obvious in the eyes of the narrator; as the dinner goes on, Encolpius will start not only observing more eccentric details in the

[1] See Rosenblüth 1909, 38 ff.; Preston 1915, 263–4; Sullivan 1968(a), 222–3; Walsh 1970, 27; Sandy 1974, 330–7; Rosati 1983, 213–27; Slater 1990(b), 50–86; Jones 1991, 185–98.

[2] A bibliography on sympotic literature is found in Sandy, "Petronius and the tradition of the interpolated narrative", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 101 (1970), 471, n. 15. Cf. C. Corbato, "Symposium e teatro: dati e problemi", in *Spettacoli conviviali dall' antichità classica alle corti Italiane del '400. Atti del VII Convegno di Studio*, ed. F. Doglio et al. (Viterbo: 27–30 Maggio 1982) 65–76; Jones 1991, 190–4. On 'theatre-dinners', i.e. 'meals given in theatres and similar buildings and accompanied by visual entertainment', see Jones 1991, 194–7 (the quotation comes from p. 194).

occurring incidents, but will also acquire a sensitivity to the continuous dramatic presentation of staged events, and thus interpret everything through the language of the popular farcical theatre.

If we turn to literary descriptions of feasts by other writers, we realize how much these lack the consciously elaborated theatricality so evidently present in Petronius' novel. Although both Horace (*S.* 2.8.79) and Juvenal (5.157–8) effectively compare (and prefer) the crude manner in which the dinners of Nasidienus and Virro take place to a theatrical piece of farce, almost nothing in their descriptions is comparable to the carefully planned *spectaculum* Trimalchio has organized for his guests. Fragmentary pieces of information concerning elaborately contrived amusements are described by commentators,[3] but the impression one gets overall is of a rather purposeless accumulation of entertaining pieces—a far cry from the diligently composed sequence of theatrical events that are interconnected through Trimalchio's stage-directions and aim mostly at the impressive presentation of his not so impressive food.

It has been suggested that all the events which took place in the *Cena* fit into a pattern of ring composition which exists i) from 26.9 to 74.1–4 and ii) from 1–2 to 99.6. 'Events gain something by being paralleled with earlier events which are similar, and in retrospect, the earlier events gain added significance as adumbration of something which will happen later on.'[4] The validity of this theory is questionable since many of the parallels pointed out are far-fetched and unnecessary. Moreover, the missing portions of the novel forbid us to place the *Cena* in the centre of the plot's development because we do not know whether the episode at Trimalchio's feast occupied a small or a large part in the work in its original form. An additional argument which reinforces the impression of the auditor or reader that incidents are heaped up, rather than follow a particular

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[3] See Pliny, *Ep.* 9.17.1–2; Spart., *SHA* (*Vit. Hadr.* 26.4); Quint., 1.2.8; cf. Plut., *Mor.* 712E.

[4] T. Hubbard, "The narrative architecture of Petronius' *Satyricon*", *L' Antiquité Classique* 55 (1986), 201. Similar attempts to read the *Cena* through thematic classifications have been made by Walsh 1970, 113–33 (four main strands in Trimalchio's characterization: vulgarity and buffoonery, pretentiousness to learning, arrogance, superstition and morbidity); Arrowsmith 1972 (themes of luxury and death); M. Barchiesi, "L' orologio di Trimalcione (struttura e tempo narrativo in Petronio)", in *I moderni alla ricerca di Enea*, ed. F. della Corte (Roma: 1981) 131 ff. ('il tema delle lautitiae, il tema del tempo e della morte, il tema della macchina e dell' automatismo; . . . [il] tema 'delle trombe'').

pattern in clear order, is the fact that in the feast itself there are occurrences which are out of even Trimalchio's control: for example, the fall of the acrobat (54.1), and the fight of the dogs Scylax and Margarita (64.9–10) are perhaps unforeseen incidents which, nevertheless, are exploited by Trimalchio to impress his guests (see 54.5; 64.11).

Following Sandy's suggestion I have divided the narrative into nine 'skits' (sections three to eleven) according to the nine courses of food;[5] it must be pointed out that this plan has not been entirely fruitful, for there are courses which are introduced through preparatory incidents and cannot, therefore, be separated from them: for example, the fourth course does not begin at 40.3 when the dish of the *aper pilleatus* is served, but at 40.1, when slaves change the scenery and dogs run into the dining-room. The first section considers Trimalchio's *Cena* in the tradition of dinner-parties performed on stage either in the mimic theatre or in the comedies of Plautus and Terence. Sections two to eleven follow the order of Petronius' narrative, and comment on the events from a theatrical point of view.

I. *Convivia Poetarum et Philosophorum*

During the theatrical analysis of each one of the *Cena*-events, one witnesses that the similarities between Trimalchio's feast and a staged mime transcend mere coincidence. Although no extant Roman mimes have survived to justify a clear distinction between literary and nonliterary mimes, Petronius' *Cena* has been compared to one of the former kind—the literary mimes—on grounds of style, language, and characterization.[6] Recent scholarly speculation has gone even further than this and argued, rather hazardously, that Petronius "may have drawn the basic concept of a burlesque *convivium* from mime. This is not to ignore the prominent role of *cenae* in Roman satire and the rich tradition of literary symposia, but what is clearly lacking in the comic-satirical branch of table-talk where Trimalchio's dinner-party would have its antecedents is the extended dramatization and exuberance of character and incident that distinguish his."[7]

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[5] See Sandy 1974, 331, n. 4.

[6] See Preston 1915, 263; cf. Gagliardi 1980, 64; Brugnoli 1982, 82.

[7] Sandy 1974, 338.

Our source for mimic *convivia* is mainly an excerpt from a now lost speech by Cicero in the late *testimonium* of Jerome (*Ep.* 52.8.3).[8] Cicero condemns the stupidity of vulgar people who are impressed by staged anachronisms without challenging their veracity or value:

> Nothing is so easy as to deceive with a ready flow of words a contemptible mob and an unlearned congregation, which admires all the more whatever it does not understand. Pay attention to Marcus Tullius, to whom that famous and finest remark was addressed: 'Demosthenes prevented you from being the first orator, you prevented him from being the only one"; in his speech for Quintus Gallius he says on the enthusiastic support of the common people and the ignorant public speakers: 'During these games [*ludis*]—for I am talking about what I myself have recently experienced—some mimographer [*poeta*] is in control, indeed, an extremely learned person; the authorship of 'Dinner-parties between poets and philosophers' belongs to him; in it he makes Euripides and Menander, and, in another passage, Socrates and Epicurus have discussions, men whose lives we know to be separated not by years but by centuries. And yet, what applause [*plausus*] and shouting he evokes! For in the theatre [*in theatro*] he has many fellow-pupils, who, as well as he, did not learn anything from books'.

Choricius (*Apol. Mimorum* 110) refers to the host and his guests (ἑστιάτορα, δαιτυμόνας) as roles in the mimic theatre, while Seneca the Younger (*De brev. vitae* 12.8) condemns the excessive level of luxury in which the leisured people (*otiosi*) of his age live, and thinks that even the extravagant presentation and criticism of this luxury by the mimes underestimates the immense degree it presented in reality:

> They really recognize their forgetfulness of many things, but they also pretend forgetfulness of many. Some vices amuse them as being proofs of their prosperity: to know what one is doing seems to be a characteristic of an insignificant and contemptuous person. Go on now and say that the mimes invent many things to make a mock of luxury. In fact they pass over many more than they contrive, and such an abundance of unbelievable vices has come forward in this age alone that by now we can accuse the mimes of negligence.

Although it is impossible to identify with certainty the author of such farcical pieces, or their plot (if, indeed, they had any), Cicero's

[8] A detailed discussion of the ensuing quotations from Jerome and Seneca should be consulted in Giancotti 1967, 119–28 (with earlier bibliography); Sandy 1974, 337–9.

testimony in Jerome seems to argue firmly[9] for the theatrical (and, especially, mimic) context of such banquets on stage: note the clear references to *ludis, plausus, theatro*, and the comic character of anachronistic discussions, reminiscent of the competition-scene between Aeschylus and Euripides in Arist., *Frogs* 830 ff.[10]

New Comedy scenes of symposiastic merriment, in the way they are exemplified in Plautine comedies, have not been given adequate attention by scholars as a possible precedent of mimic presentations of banquet-scenes in the theatres, because by Petronius' time Plautine comedies had ceased to be performed. Yet such scenes constitute a standard source of entertainment in the farcical theatre of earlier days: in the *Mostellaria*, Philolaches and Callidamates with their respective girlfriends, Philematium and Delphium, organize a banquet; a small table, dice, and water for the hands are mentioned as props for the scene (308–9). The finale of the *Persa* is a banquet (757 ff.),[11] in which each person has a role to perform: Toxilus, Sagaristio, and Lemniselenis are the diners, Paegnium the waiter, and Dordalus the butt of the company. Toxilus and Sagaristio impersonate the dancers Hegea and Diodorus by imitating favourite postures in their dancing movements (cf. the imitation which Trimalchio's cook performs of the *tragoedus Ephesus* at 70.13). Likewise, according to the general festive atmosphere, Stichus and Sangarinus arrange a feast in which they get drunk, eat tit-bits, invite the flute-player of the performance to have a drink and laugh at him; Stephanium, the girlfriend of both of them, dances to entertain them and they follow her example, performing various salacious and lascivious movements (Pl., *Sti.* 683–775).

One cannot, however, exclude the possibility that Petronius' *Cena* may have originated from the satirical tradition of the *cena* as a vehicle for social criticism, the author elaborating on his model and presenting it with strong reminiscences of farcical events from the popular stage. Moreover, the theatricality of the *Cena* does not gain more in depth, if we assume that Petronius was inspired from a staged *convivium* rather than arguing that he added mimic events in

[9] It is worth noting, though, that Bonaria 1965, 87 classifies the title *Convivia Poetarum et Philosophorum* in the *Fragmenta Dubia*. Cf. Bonaria 1965, 138. For *poeta* = mimographer in the Jerome-quotation see Sandy 1974, 338.

[10] For a discussion of this contest and its literary tradition see K.J. Dover, *Aristophanes. Frogs* (Oxford: 1993) 10–37.

[11] See E. Woytek, *T. Maccius Plautus. Persa* (Wien: 1982) 30–3.

a satirical prototype. It is probably true that the author of this novel is not writing satire in its conventional sense, but still there is a great deal of poignancy inside Trimalchio's feast. A detailed theatrical interpretation of the events in the *Cena Trimalchionis*, will show that, regardless of his particular source of inspiration, Petronius, through his vulgar host, has composed the most spectacular dinner of ancient literary fiction.

II. *Principium cenae: Sat. 26.7–31.2*

The textual gap between the Quartilla-scene and the *Cena Trimalchionis* leaves many questions unanswered regarding the exact reason for the terrible physical and psychological condition of the heroes (26.7, 26.8, 26.10). An invitation to dinner changes the mood (26.10) and forms a brief introductory note to a dazzling spectacle. The first time the actual feast is mentioned in connection with Trimalchio's name is when one of Agamemnon's slaves announces in an appropriate rhetorical manner the name of the host and some characteristic details concerning his habits and personal preoccupations: *Trimalchio, lautissimus homo . . . horologium in triclinio et bucinatorem habet subornatum* 'Trimalchio, a most elegant man—he has a clock and a uniformed trumpeter in his dining-room' (26.9). The notion of taste combined with luxurious wealth is expressed by the adjective *lautus*, but the term *lautitiae* also refers to theatrically staged incidents of the *Cena*,[12] thus underlining the theatrical way in which Trimalchio shows his arrogant lack of taste. Obsession with time and death is amusingly presented through Trimalchio's employment of both an inanimate object, a kind of clock, and a human being, a trumpeter,[13] to remind him constantly how

[12] At 27.4 it refers to the extravagant details of Trimalchio's appearance and behaviour at the play-ground; at 32.1 to the spectacular way in which the starters were presented; at 34.8 to the Aethiopians who offered wine, instead of water, to the guests to clean their hands; at 57.2 to the spectacle of the *apophoreta* which causes laughter (56.8–10); at 70.7 to the false quarrel of two slaves; at 73.5 to Fortunata's spectacular treasures. On the theme of *lautitiae* and its function in the *Cena* and the society of the first century A.D. see Barchiesi 1981, 132–4.

[13] On Trimalchio's *bucinator* see Baldwin, "Trimalchio's domestic staff", *Acta Classica* 21 (1978), 87. He is dressed up in a particular costume, *subornatus* (26.9). On similar usages of *suborno* see Pl., *Per.* (Arg.) 4; Petr., 36.2; *Rhet. ad Her.* 3.21.34. J.D. Meerwaldt, "De Trimalchionis, Ctesibii, Platonis automatis", *Mnemosyne* 49 (1921), 406–10 wrongly argues that Trimalchio's trumpeter was an automatic piece of machinery, attached to the clock.

much of his life is behind him (26.9). This morbid concern has a spectacular dimension, since the trumpeter appears dressed in a specific manner as if he were performing a role, his outfit probably consisting of exceedingly colourful clothes to match the vividly coloured garments of Trimalchio, his wife, and the rest of their household. Moreover, Trimalchio's usage of the *bucina*, a kind of horn-trumpet—normally used by sailors, ox-herds, swine-herds, and the Roman army—merely to announce the passing of time, displays his spectacular eccentricity together with a vulgar superstition.

The customary visit to the baths before dinner gives the hero and his friends the opportunity to witness for themselves the amusing spectacle their future host provides with his mere appearance, a spectacle which, in a way, forms the overture to his ensuing dinner (27.4: *et quidem iam principium cenae videtis*). The picture of Trimalchio is introduced to the eyes of the narrator and the audience of the novel in an abrupt and startling manner (27.1). He must have been among the groups of players for a long time, but he is described by Encolpius as if he had just appeared out of nowhere. In the eyes of the narrator he is a *senex calvus* (27.1), although it is not clear whether his baldness is due to his old age or to the shaving of his head (32.2). Whatever the case, the contrast with the long-haired boys (27.1; he was one himself once, 63.3) is an obvious and amusing one. Trimalchio's reddish tunic at the baths is only a slight hint of the tasteless multicoloured costumes that Encolpius will witness throughout the meal.[14] Trimalchio's desire to make a theatrical impact in everyone's eyes prompts him to play ball at his age wearing his bedroom slippers (27.2), and to prefer coloured balls for his play. Ovid (*Met.* 10.262) speaks of embroidered balls, but he has not reached the level of Trimalchio's startling ball.

Trimalchio's game at the baths foreshadows the series of games that will take place during the dinner.[15] The intense devotion to games

[14] Bright colours in outrageous combinations are a recurrent motif in the whole feast: see S. Lilja, "Odour sensations in the Roman novel", *Arctos* 7 (1972), 31 and n. 2; Beran 1973, 232 ff.; Currie 1989, 318 and n. 4. On elements of grotesque caricature in Trimalchio's three appearances (27.1–6; 28.2–5; 32.1–4) see Cèbe 1966, 224–5.

[15] The players formed a triangle (is it the *lusus trigo*?) and threw the ball to each other, and a *pilicrepus* counted the balls that each player caught. If the ball was dropped, they would pick it up and start all over again: see Hor., *S.* 1.6.126; Sen., *Ep.* 56.1, *NQ* 6.10.2; J. Väterlein, *Roma Ludens. Kinder und Erwachsene beim Spiel im Antiken Rom* (Amsterdam: 1976) 40–1; Balsdon 1969, 165. Trimalchio tastelessly changes

of the vulgar host and his guests has been aptly noted by a scholar who suggests that a strong gladiatorial element permeates the feast, considers the games of the *Cena* against the background of the funeral games in Homer and the fifth book of the *Aeneid*, but erroneously concludes that 'the trouble with Trimalchio's games . . . is that they are diminished, degenerated, unsuited for and unable to bear noble modes of conduct.'[16] According to him this deterioration points out the failure of Trimalchio's and his guests' mentality to confront death. When, however, we take into account games such as 'backgammon' (33.2) and the '*bucca-bucca* game' (64.11–12), it is difficult to accept as likely a serious interpretation of images which were meant to be a source of amusement and ridiculous entertainment for the audience of the feast and that of the novel. Trimalchio's passion for games, evident even before the actual meal, becomes a warning for the auditors and the readers of the novel to expect a dinner-party with a strong element of *ludi* inside it. The man himself, whose feast in every part is going to be a show, is introduced into the plot of the novel and is characterized right from the beginning as a *spectaculum* (27.2).

The picture of Trimalchio at the baths is an extremely funny continuation of the play-ground *spectaculum*. Trimalchio is being attended to in a luxurious manner (28.2, 28.4, 28.5). The reproach of the conservative Romans does not affect his way of bathing; for him linen towels are not appropriate for drying himself. His taste prefers longer pieces of cloth, blankets made of the softest wool; they are employed as a visual effect which helps in the creation of another spectacular appearance.

After the bath Trimalchio is enveloped (*involutus*, 28.4) in a woollen rain-proof coat (*coccina gausapa*, 28.4)[17] in order not to catch a cold! The theatrical vulgarity and the effeminate luxury of Trimalchio as seen in the use of the *gausapa* (the same cloth was worn by a *cinaedus* in Quartilla's mimic orgy, 21.2) are intensified by the fact that the

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these rules. This change is two-fold: he never uses a ball that has fallen on the ground (27.2); he counts the balls that he has *missed* catching (27.3). The changes are characterized before their description as *res novas* (27.3), 'new developments' (see *OCD*, s.v. 6a) and *lautitias* (27.4), ironically, at the end of the scene.

[16] C. Saylor, "Funeral Games: the Significance of Games in the *Cena Trimalchionis*", *Latomus* 46 (1987), 601.

[17] On the *gausapa* see Pliny, *NH* 8.193; Lucil., 586 Marx; Hor., *S.* 2.8.10; Mart., *Ep.* 14.138; L.M. Wilson, *The Clothing of the Ancient Romans* (Baltimore: 1938) fig. 52a–54.

woollen coat is a scarlet one, a favourite colour of Trimalchio (his *pallium* is scarlet, 32.2), second in value only to purple clothes, and sharply criticized by the Romans of the old school (Sen., *Ep.* 114.21; *NQ* 7.31.2; cf. Mart., *Ep.* 1.96.6); nevertheless, it is a good choice for an unforgettable image.

Music constituted an inseparable element in the organization of a dinner which a host had arranged in order to entertain his guests. Bonaria provides a clear account of the development of music at Roman banquets through the ages, from the time of the *carmina convivalia* and their sollemnly religious connotations to the hilarious *comissatio* and the immodest extravagance of the Empire.[18] At Trimalchio's dinner, however, music performs an unusual and precise role: it is not used for religion, pleasure or for aesthetic reasons but it is employed either for trivial duties of the household or for the impressive introduction of the next spectacle (course, or event, or Trimalchio himself).[19] It is now that this motif and its significant function enter for the first time: while Trimalchio was carried away after his bath, a musician[20] played with miniature reed-pipes and entertained him all the way to his house (28.5). Trimalchio wants a private entertainment in a public place, and the result of his arrogant desire is ridiculously described as a secretive communication (28.5: *tamquam in aurem aliquid secreto diceret*) rather than an enjoyable musical interlude; one imagines how funny the picture of the *symphoniacus* would have been: he must have been walking beside his master within a very close proximity to his ear, if he was to be heard only by him and if he wanted to produce with the tiny reed-pipes a sound which could have been audible to the human ear. Besides the tasteless use of music in the particular context, it seems that the trained slave marks with his musical performance the theatrical exit of Trimalchio and the end of his overall spectacle at the baths.[21]

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[18] M. Bonaria, "La musica conviviale del mondo latino antico al medioevo", in *Spettacoli conviviali dall' antichità classica alle corti Italiane del '400. Atti del VII Convegno di Studio*, ed. F. Doglio et al. (Viterbo: 27–30 Maggio 1982) 119–47.

[19] On the importance of music in Trimalchio's world see Sandy 1974, 331 and n. 5; Bonaria 1982, 136–8; Rosati 1983, 217; Horsfall 1989, 197–8.

[20] *symphoniacus* (28.5); cf. Cic., *Pis.* 83; *Mil.* 55; *Verr.* 5.73; Gaius, *Inst.* 3.212. We do not really know what the word *symphonia* actually meant (see Cic., *Verr.* 3.44.105; Hor., *A.P.* 374 ff.); however, although it can have the meaning of concord, a harmony of sounds, the way music (vocal and instrumental) was performed in Trimalchio's vulgar world would have been a real torture for his guests' ears.

[21] Music signals the beginning of a certain spectacle at 32.1, 33.4, 36.1, 36.6, 47.8, 78.5–6, and the end at 28.5, 34.1.

A series of spectacles is being unfolded in front of Encolpius, Giton and Ascyltus when they enter Trimalchio's house, where the ordinary is humorously combined with the ostentatious in such a manner as to create the vulgar. Each of the sights is eccentric enough to catch a stranger's attention and demonstrates a different aspect of Trimalchio's character: cruel dominance behind the mock-imperial threat of the inscription fixed on the door-post (28.7), ridiculous tastelessness behind the multicoloured image the porter (*ostiarius*) provides while performing his humble duty (28.8), a desire to surprise his guests behind the spectacle of the magpie which greeted visitors (28.9). It should be noted, however, that characterization is not the only aim of this description. The visual element which will make its impact clear in a staged manner during the dinner, gains a predominant position even from the exterior space surrounding Trimalchio's private 'theatrical' dining-room. Admiration (28.6),[22] already created by Trimalchio's image at the baths, is gradually giving place to amazement (29.1) and farcical fright (29.1), when a vividly painted *cave canem* mosaic surprises Encolpius who takes this well-known picture for an actual menace and collapses in fear (29.1). The ironical naiveté Encolpius presents here is surely meant to be seen as a comic point, similar to knockabout farcical incidents of the popular stage which would make an audience laugh.[23] Encolpius' friends reacted in such a manner (29.2), but he insisted on giving the impression of an eager auditor who avidly responds to all the visual messages sent to him as if from a stage filled with impressive surprises.

Trimalchio's inclination towards dramatic forms of expression is soon confirmed; Encolpius notices a colourful picture covering another part of the wall (29.3–6). Through a detailed account of subtitled pictures any visitor could find out how Trimalchio wants to introduce himself to his guests before he actually appears. Nero's entrance into Rome after his return from Greece strikingly resembles the depiction of Trimalchio's triumphant entrance into the same city,[24]

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22 On the elements of admiration and surprise as contributors to the theatricality of the *Cena* see Rosati 1983, 218. L. Deschamps, "L' ἀπροσδόκητον dans le festin chez Trimalchion du *Satiricon* de Pétrone", *Platon* 40 (1988), 31–9 has an interesting discussion on the motif of the 'unexpected', ἀπροσδόκητον, and its various manifestations in the *Cena*.

23 See Slater, " 'Against Interpretation': Petronius and Art Criticism", *Ramus* 16 (1987), 167–8, and Pl., *Most.* 849–56, where an imaginary pregnant dog, though quiet, is used jokingly as a false menace to Theopropides.

24 Suet., *Nero* 25.1; cf. Plin., *NH* 19.24, and Saylor 1987, 596–7; Rosati 1983, 218.

to the world of knowledge which leads to wealth through his stewardship, and possibly to the distinguished office of the *sevir Augustalis* (30.2), one of whose duties was to organize the public spectacles.[25] Thus Trimalchio presents and establishes himself as the self-made man of the theatre, and, indeed, the tasteless mixture of pictures from the Homeric epics and a gladiatorial fight corroborates this impression.

A plethora of inscriptions overwhelms Encolpius and his friends as they enter the *triclinium* itself, the place which will constitute the 'stage' for the ensuing series of dramatic events. Exhibitionism (30.2), arrogance (30.3), and superstition (30.4) are conveyed by these visual signs which are ironically characterized as 'delights' (*voluptatibus*, 30.5), but they certainly achieve their aim in creating the feeling that Trimalchio is present, even though he is actually absent. An additional element of surprise is presented when the new guests are reminded in a loud (30.5: *exclamavit*) and intimidating (30.6: *trepidavimus*) manner to enter on the right foot. The host's superstition expressed in his orders to his household is described from a comic point of view but the slave's startling voice marks also the crucial moment in the narrative when Encolpius, Giton, and Ascyltus enter the *triclinium*.

One notices a climactic movement of the theatrical element which is parallel to the gradual movement of the heroes from an exterior space to a more interior one, ending in the most intimate place of the stage itself. If one visualizes Trimalchio's house as a round amphitheatre, one can easily see that the events from 28.6 to 30.1 constituted the exterior part of the amphitheatre, the images from 30.1 to 30.6 formed the part of the arena which leads to the stage, while, once the guests as cast have stepped inside the *triclinium* (30.7), they find themselves participating in the show Trimalchio has prepared for them. This progressive movement is clearly signalled through the careful mention of doors and thresholds (28.8: *aditu*; 28.9: *super limen*; 30.5: *in triclinium intrare*; 30.6: *limen transiret*) and will be continued, from the moment the heroes enter the purely theatrical space of the dining-room onwards, through a series of events which are no longer mere impressive visual images but brief sketches of a farcical nature; in these sketches human beings (trained slaves or professional theatre-persons) together with inanimate objects (food) are transformed

[25] See E. Campanile, "Interpretazioni Petroniane", *Studi e Saggi Linguistici* 4 (1964), 125.

into risible actors preparing the atmosphere for the extraordinary climactic entrance of their director, producer, and main actor, Trimalchio (32.1–4).

The first in this series of farcical events is the incident of the stripped slave who appeals to Encolpius' benevolence to help him avoid the punishment for losing the steward's cheap clothes in the public baths (30.7–8). The case seems routine and there is no obvious reason for assuming that this is part of a role-playing, diligently devised in advance by the host's theatrical mind. But everything is too simple to be true: the slave falls at the friends' feet the moment they enter (30.7) as if he were expecting them, he is already stripped for flogging (30.7), he has a ready excuse (30.7), the steward adopts an appropriately severe posture (30.10), evokes ridiculously sentimental reasons for his anger (30.11), and, almost immediately, forgives and forgets in an absurdly unexpected behaviour. If there is something of a mimic spirit in this event, Trimalchio is sure to have used it not for its own sake but for his own benefit: as it turned out, the slave happened (!) to be the *ministrator domini*, the butler who would make sure that his 'benefactors' would have best quality wine (31.2), a fact which underlined the generosity of the slave as well as the wealth of the master.

III. *Gustatio: Sat. 31.3–33.2*

It is appropriate to look now, in the order in which Petronius' text refers to them, at the list of persons who are used both as the cast and the audience of the shows in the *Cena Trimalchionis.*

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Encolpius (31.3)	Dama (41.10)	Plocamus (64.2)
Ascyltus (31.3)	Seleucus (42.1)	Croesus (64.5)
Giton (31.3)	Phileros (43.1)	Habinnas (65.3)
Trimalchio (32.1)	Ganymede (44.1)	Scintilla (65.7)
Vetus conviva (33.8)	Echion (45.1)	*Ingens frequentia* (65.3)
Fortunata (37.1)	Agamemnon (46.1)	Massa (68.4)
C. Pompeius Diogenes (38.7)	Hermeros (57.1)	*servi* (passim)
C. Iulius Proculus (38.11)	Niceros (61.1)	

The staged setting of the *Cena* is already evident from the time of Encolpius' reclining at the table. The pouring of water on to the guests' hands and the paring of their hangnails by Trimalchio's slaves who are natives of the luxurious Alexandria, is the first of many similar incidents which show the theatrical intentions that the host has for his dinner-party. Encolpius notes that during the performance of their job the slave boys were continuously singing (31.4: *obiter cantabant*). One would expect that this happened in order to enliven such a boring task (*tam molesto . . . officio*, 31.4), but when Encolpius finds out that the whole household is being trained[26] (31.6: *paratissimus, excepit*) to answer in a musical rhythm[27] to every order it receives, then the room is being transformed from a gentleman's dining-room to a choir of a pantomimic performance (*pantomimi chorum*, 31.7).

The pantomimes, performances of a solo dancer who gesticulated to the sound of music and the song of a chorus,[28] were extremely popular in the Imperial Age, despite severe criticism of them by the conservative moralists. The mention of a pantomimic chorus just at the beginning of the actual feast and before any of the various spectacles has taken place, functions as a direct warning to the auditor and the reader of the novel that what is going to follow will be presented as a show. This does not necessarily mean that the show is going to be tasteful or that the musical pieces in it will be harmonious and pleasant to hear. On the contrary, whenever music and songs are mentioned in the feast, they are almost always not only performed at an incredibly high volume which makes them impossible to understand (the response of the slaves must have been very loud to remind Encolpius of pantomimic choruses), but they are harsh-sounding as well (31.6: *acido cantico*). Moreover, the mention of such a metaphor from the stage reinforces the characterization of Encolpius himself as a person who conceives what he sees and hears through the language of the theatre and, in particular, through its popular

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[26] On Trimalchio's theatrically trained slaves see Corbett 1970, 55; J.H. D' Arms, "Slaves at Roman Convivia", in *Dining in a Classical Context*, ed. W.J. Slater (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press: 1991) 171–83.

[27] *canticum* (31.6) perhaps refers not to a particular song, but to modulated speech: *OLD*, s.v., 3.

[28] See Luc., *De Salt.* 29. On general pieces of information concerning the techniques and history of pantomime in Rome see V. Rotolo, *Il pantomimo. Studi e testi* (Palermo: 1957); Kokolakis 1959, 30–54; M.L. Angrisani Sanfilippo, "Testimonianze sulla fortuna del pantomimo a Roma", *Studi Romani* 32 (1984), 173–83.

low genres.[29] From his point of view everything has now begun to acquire a theatrical quality and it is in the same manner that the audience of the novel should enjoy the ensuing events.

It is hardly a surprising innovation that Petronius introduces the conventional motif of food in his satirical dinner,[30] but the degree to which the courses are elaborately served is certainly neither hackneyed nor irrelevant to the theatrical scheme Trimalchio has in mind for his *cena*. The extraordinary ideas Trimalchio has about cookery and their fulfilment by his expert cooks are a clear example of the dichotomy between illusion and reality, or, rather, the 'theatrical' life which dominates the *Cena*. It has even been suggested that the part of the novel known as *Cena Trimalchionis* constitutes, in accordance with the elaborately disguised nine courses of food, "a nine-scene 'skit' . . . commencing with a startling, eye-catching entrance, often spiced with a variety of wide-ranging dialogue, the whole production . . . concluded by the noisy, precipitate departure of Encolpius, Giton and Ascyltus to the accompaniment of trumpets in the manner of the raucous mêlée that served as the ending of a mimic performance."[31] As I intend to show by the end of the chapter, this statement is no exaggeration, and what should be kept in mind as significant for the proper understanding of the complex scenes which follow, is the important part food has in the overall theatrical structure of the meal. Almost all the ensuing spectacles will aim to prepare the way for the next course in Trimalchio's usual vulgar manner. It becomes apparent from the hors d' œuvre that Trimalchio is not content to serve his food simply but has given instructions for a particular decoration of the course which would give the impression of food being prepared at the moment of the actual serving: a donkey carries the olives (31.9), the colour of the damsons together with the seeds of the pomegranate gives the impression of coals and burning fire, on top of which sausages are grilled and served hot to the guests (31.11).[32]

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[29] On Encolpius' and the other guests' special acquaintance with the stage see Rosati 1983, 218–9. On Encolpius' 'hamming' histrionics outside the *Cena* see Coffey 1976, 271, n. 86.

[30] See N.A. Hudson, "Food in Roman Satire", in *Satire and Society in Ancient Rome*, ed. S.H. Braund (Univ. of Exeter: 1989) 69–87; E. Gowers, *The Loaded Table. Representations of Food in Roman Literature* (Oxford: 1993) 109 ff.

[31] Sandy 1974, 331. In spite of the fragmentary state of the surviving mimic texts there are some references to food and drink, although we cannot know their context: see Brugnoli 1982, 86.

[32] See Rosati 1983, 222 on the illusionary dimensions in which Trimalchio

After two remarkable appearances at the playground and at the baths, Trimalchio enters the room of the actual feast dressed in a manner which constitutes the climax of his extravagance. The build-up to this climax had started at 31.3 when the guests, regarded as the 'cast', had taken their places and the *gustatio* (31.8–11) was served to the accompaniment of loud music: everything in the general organization of things points towards Trimalchio. His vulgar luxury is dictated by four factors: his effeminacy, his desire to show off his wealth, his superstition, and his pretence to belong to a social class higher than he really does.[33] His arrival is signalled by music (32.1: *ad symphoniam*), as if a new spectacle was about to take place or a celebrity, magistrate or emperor, was entering an amphitheatre. In his attempt to look a Very Important Person, the excessive number of jewels and the vulgar combinations of colours in his tasteless wardrobe (scarlet cloak, white napkin, purple stripe on the napkin, the pale pink of his shaved head) make Trimalchio look more like a grotesque caricature of a VIP taken from a farcical piece,[34] rather than an actual one.

Although we cannot define with certainty either the rules of the game that Trimalchio is playing as he enters the dining-room, or indeed the game itself,[35] we can notice specific facts about it which contribute to the theatricality of Trimalchio at his third entrance. He announces in a pseudo-polite manner his intention to finish the game (33.2), in order to draw everyone's attention towards him. The game was not already in the room, but, after Trimalchio's statement which functions like a formal announcement of a spectacle and, at

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intends to present his food. For similar displays of eccentricity, which aimed at creating the impression that the food was served very fresh, see Sen., *NQ* 3.17.2 and Rosati 1983, 222, n. 28.

[33] See M.S. Smith, *Petronius. Cena Trimalchionis* (Oxford: 1975) 68–70. On the type of garment worn by Trimalchio see E.H. Brewster, "The *Synthesis* of the Romans", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 49 (1918), 131–43; W.B. MacDaniel, "Roman Dinner Garments", *Classical Philology* 20 (1925), 268–70; Wilson 1938, 169–72. It seems that Trimalchio has not chosen a light garment for his appearance, since his shoulders are burdened by the cloth (*oneratas veste cervices*, 32.2), a hint either about the weight of the cloth or about the multitude of decorative objects hanging from his *pallium*. In either case his theatrical image is unforgettable.

[34] A mimic actor who would perform a caricature of a luxurious person would have appeared on stage like Trimalchio: see Sen., *De Brev. Vitae* 12.8. Cf. Gagliardi 1980, 65.

[35] Perhaps, the game in question is the *ludus duodecim scriptorum*, a sort of backgammon. For its rules see Väterlein 1976, 55–7; for bibliography on the subject see Väterlein 1976, 55, n. 381; cf. Horsfall 1989, 84.

the same time, as the cue for the slave who was probably waiting outside to hear the phrase and enter, it is brought in and is introduced as the most charming thing of all (33.2: *rem omnium delicatissimam*). Once more Trimalchio and the game-motif are tightly connected (cf. 27.2–3; 64.11–12). The picture that the game itself provides is indeed worthy of its player: the strong wood of terebinth, out of which the board of the game is made, and the fragile crystal dice[36] make a laughable contrast, but the combination of the two must have produced a striking image. To this splendour one must add the vulgar use of gold and silver coins instead of black and white counters; this substitution displays Trimalchio's ostentation and, at the same time, gives more vivid colours to the overall picture of the game.

IV. *Repositorium cum corbe: Sat. 33.3–34.10*

The *gustatio* had not yet finished (33.3), and Trimalchio is still noisily engrossed in his game, when the second spectacular course is brought in: a wooden hen in an egg-laying position on a tray (33.3) completes the theatrical pandemonium. The culinary illusion which the cook has prepared in obedience to his master's orders is four-fold: the hen is inedible (*gallina erat lignea*, 33.3), it lays neither wooden nor ordinary eggs, but peahen's eggs (33.4), the eggs are not actual peahen's eggs, but balls of thick pastry (33.6), pastry is only their exterior cover, since they contain an unexpected delicacy (33.8).

The spectacle of this tray is staged in a theatrical pattern which has already been clearly observed in the serving of the starters (31.8–11) and will constitute from now on a regular scheme for dramatic surprise in the course of the culinary events: the discovery of something special in the menu is accompanied by loud and harsh music (33.4: *symphonia strepente*; cf. 35.6)[37] which intensifies the mock-grandeur of the whole spectacle; Trimalchio plays the worried and ignorant host while in reality he discreetly guides his guests' reactions as he wishes (33.5). Additional farcical dimensions to the incident are

[36] Trimalchio seems to favour crystal. The dog-fight at 64.10, where the dogs break all the crystal in the room, indirectly suggests that the dining-room was like a kaleidoscope.

[37] Cf. Quint., 1.2.8. On *strepo* connected with harsh-sounding musical instruments see Verg., *Aen.* 8.2; Hor., *Carm.* 2.1.18; Sen., *Thy.* 575; Stat., *Theb.* 4.95.

given by Encolpius' naiveté (33.7) and his fellow-guest's avid expectations (33.8), and by the incongruous contrast between the soft and fragile pastry eggs, and the excessively heavy spoons (33.6; cf. the same sort of contrast in Trimalchio's appearance in the baths at 28.4 or the dining-room at 32.2 or in his game at 33.2). The theatricality of this disguised course is reinforced by the deliberate choice of the word *scaena* (33.5),[38] referring to the unusual disclosure of peahen's eggs under a wooden hen, and by the masterly achievement of perfection in presenting these four deceptive levels through the repeatedly rehearsed performance of the same spectacle (33.4; 33.8; cf. 36.8).

Music signals that the time allowed (everything seems to obey a pre-scheduled programme) for the spectacle of the *repositorium* (33.3–8) has passed, and that the servants must clear the table for the next course. Trimalchio's originality in the use of music as an ancillary element in his show consists not only in the abrupt manner (34.1: *cum subito*) the *symphonia* is being performed, designed to draw everyone's attention and to make the point clear to everyone's consciousness that this part of the show has reached its end, but also in the singing and dancing movements that the attendants perform while they swiftly do their job (34.1: *gustatoria pariter a choro cantante rapiuntur*). The characterization of the waiters as a *chorus* by Encolpius seems to imply both the complete harmony and high volume of the singing during this staged act, and that the procedure of the identification in the narrator's eyes between Trimalchio's servants and a pantomime-chorus (cf. 31.4–7) has now been completed.

The two long-haired Aethiopian slaves[39] enter (34.4), and their appearance is strongly associated right from the beginning with the world of entertainment: *quales solent esse qui harenam in amphitheatro spargunt* 'just like the men who scatter sand in an amphitheatre' (34.4). Their presence in the particular context seems to suggest not only that the stage, Trimalchio's dining-room, has to be cleaned after the accident of the silver-dish (34.2), but that another spectacle is about to follow, namely the silver skeleton. Encolpius identifies these slaves with slaves in the amphitheatre, whose normal duty was to sprinkle saffron-water

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[38] For parallels of the word *scaena* in this meaning of 'a piece of artificial or melodramatic behaviour designed to impress' (*OLD*) see Apul., *Met.* 2.28; Quint., 6.1.48–9. Cf. Bonaria 1965, 165: *scena, theatri locus aut ludus mimicus.*

[39] W.B. Sedgwick, *The CENA TRIMALCHIONIS of Petronius* (Oxford: 1959) ad loc.: 'Ethiopians never have long hair, so these must be ordinary slaves, dressed as Negroes.' Cf. one of the disguises proposed on board Lichas' ship at 102.13.

in the arena,[40] even though this duty is not fulfilled in Trimalchio's dining-room. This implies either that the slaves wore actual costumes in obedience to Trimalchio's orders and stage-directions, or that Encolpius' theatrical mind, which interprets everything through the code of popular spectacles, sees them as such, because he has conceived the *Cena* as a grandiose spectacle. Whether they are dressed as the slaves of the amphitheatre or not, the contrast between their large stature and their tiny wineskins (34.4: *pusillis utribus*) adds to the comic effect. The ultimate intention of Trimalchio's plan is to offer wine, instead of water, to the guests to wash their hands. This action may be distasteful and vulgar, but is a good example of the manner in which Trimalchio wants to transform even the slightest and simplest duties of his household into an exotic illusion, which would impress the guests and would contribute to the overall metamorphosis of his dinner-party into a show.

The spectacle of the skeleton is a trivial example of the *memento mori*-motif, which was frequently employed at dinners to show that life is short and fragile; consequently one must enjoy it as much as possible before death comes.[41] Petronius, however, takes this hackneyed theme and through Trimalchio's boorishness makes a comedy out of it. Whereas all our other sources show that the use of this motif consisted of a simple procession of the skeleton paraded round the guests, in the *Cena* it is taken further. The *larva* that the slave brings in the room functions like a puppet[42] (34.8) and, indeed, is meant to do so. The mere presence of a skeleton would remind Trimalchio's guests that they will, sooner or later, die. There was,

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[40] Smith 1975, ad loc., notes that 'Encolpius is reminded of the attendants whose job it was to sprinkle the surface of the arena with water to keep down the dust and to freshen the air'. The arena, however, was sprinkled with *crocus*, saffron, at the games: Mart., *Ep.* 5.25.7–8; 8.33.4; cf. Sandy 1974, 332, n. 6; B.K. Braswell, "Zu Petron 34.4", *Philologus* 125 (1981), 152, n. 2. Balsdon 1969, 258, n. 66–7, says that saffron-water 'was sprinkled on the stage, giving a strong and pleasing scent;'. One realizes also how bright and colourful the yellow of the saffron would make the sand in the arena (and the floor in Trimalchio's dining-room).

[41] See Smith 1975, ad loc. Cf. W. Arrowsmith, "Luxury and Death in the *Satyricon*", in *Essays on Classical Literature*, selected from *ARION* with an introduction by Niall Rudd (Cambridge / New York: 1972) 308; Coffey 1976, 188 and 268, n. 50; Horsfall 1989, 199. Cf., however, Gagliardi 1980, 67, n. 26, who connects this message especially with mimes.

[42] Heron, *Autom.* 22.3–6 describes a tragedy (Sophocles' *Nauplios*) performed with marionettes; the storm in the sea when the Greeks left Troy and Ajax's death were the main subjects of the performance. On the comparison between the *larva argentea* and a νευρόσπαστον, a puppet, see Rosati 1983, 215, n. 7; cf. Barchiesi 1981, 135.

therefore, no need for additional elements, such as the silver, out of which the skeleton is made,[43] or the kind of improvised performance Trimalchio produced (34.9: *aliquot figuras exprimeret*)[44] when he threw the contrivance down on the table once or twice (34.9). However, these needless details are there; this indicates the dramatic representation of what in the hands of another, less imaginative, author would have scarcely been more than a κοινὸς τόπος.

V. *Repositorium cum duodecim signis: Sat. 35.1–39.15*

The actual significance of the skeleton-spectacle is made clear when we consider it in connection with the next dish. The introduction of the zodiac dish (35.1–6) seems to be a consequence of Trimalchio's hackneyed poetical compositions on the instability and insignificance of human nature (34.10). When, however, one notices the regular pattern of spectacles which are used to prepare in a spectacular manner the way for the next course, then the whole performance of the skeleton acquires an auxiliary character, because it looks as if it was originally planned in advance by Trimalchio, who wanted to fulfil his primary aim, that is, to make smoother and more impressive the introduction of his next course, namely the dish with the zodiac signs on it. Sandy rightly discerns a chain which links the events before and after the skeleton-performance: the serving of the wine (34.6) is the cue for Trimalchio's banal moralizations which, in turn, serve as the cue for the skeleton-'pantomime'; this prompts Trimalchio to recite his verses (34.10) and invite his friends to the next course (35.1).[45]

Attention has already been drawn towards the similarity between this zodiac dish and elaborately described dishes in later Greek com-

[43] Trimalchio seems to prefer silver to gold, but still he uses it in the most impractical situations: he has a silver *matella* (27.3), *lanx* (28.8), *Lares* (29.8), *craticula* (31.11; 70.7), *pinna* (33.1), *clibanus* (35.6), *corona* (50.1), *pelvis* (70.8). Apart from Trimalchio's desire to show off his wealth by presenting a silver skeleton, note the vivid and colourful image that the skeleton must have provided if it was bright silver.

[44] For *exprimo* in the sense of 'adopting a theatrical posture' cf. Cic., *De Orat.* 3.220.

[45] See Sandy 1974, 332. Arrowsmith 1972, 315 interprets wrongly the theatrical device of the skeleton in a highly moralistic sense. On the theatrical connection of Trimalchio's verses (34.10) see Baldwin, "Petronius 34.10", *Maia* 31 (1979), 145; Gagliardi 1980, 67, n. 25.

edy (Alexis, fr. 261 Kock), but the source from which Petronius derived his inspiration both for the visual (35.2–5) and the theoretical part of this risible incident (39.5–15) may have been the theatre of the mimes which not only ridiculed philosophical theories but also exploited, perhaps in a series of astrological mimes, people's beliefs concerning stars and their influence upon the future.[46] Trimalchio wants to dramatize the most insignificant details in order to make the presentation of his food more astonishing. Music provides, as usual (cf. 33.4), the introduction and the accompaniment to the spectacular disclosure of the upper part of the dish with the zodiacs (36.1): birds, sow's udders, a hare dressed up as Pegasus, fish swimming in a spiced sauce which was running from the skins of the four figures of the satyr Marsyas at the corners of the dish (36.2–3); the slaves run to obey their master's orders in time to the music and perform movements of the *tripudium*, a ritual dance which Seneca (*NQ* 7.32.3) connects with the effeminate corruption of the pantomimic stage.

While the Egyptian slave was offering bread to the guests during the impressive display of the zodiac dish, someone, either Trimalchio or the slave himself, sang in a hideous manner a song from what seems to have been a mime under the probable title *Laserpiciarius* (*sc. mimus*) (35.6). This passage is our only piece of evidence for the existence of such a title among the surviving mimic fragments, and, although the form of this title resembles the forms of other mimic titles by Laberius (e.g. *Catularius*, *Centonarius*), attempts have been made to emend the text in a way that the theatrical reference disappears.[47] We know nothing of the popularity or the plot of this particular mime (if it ever existed), which might be important for the proper understanding of its Petronian context.[48] Its main point of significance in the Petronian passage is the appalling way in which the

[46] On Trimalchio's zodiac dish and Greek comedy dishes see Horsfall 1989, 201. On Laberius' astrological mimes (*Aries, Cancer, Gemelli, Taurus, Virgo*) see Walsh 1970, 26.

[47] *mimo*: *vino* Scheffer. See E.V. Marmorale, *Petronii Arbitri Cena Trimalchionis* (Firenze: 1947) ad loc. However, recitation of mimic plays in Roman banquets was a frequent event: see Brugnoli 1982, 84–5.

[48] As far as the employment of plants in the mimic theatre is concerned, we find a reference to the *faba mimus* in Sen., *Apoc.* 9.3 and Cic., *Ad Att.* 1.16.3. In Pl., *Rud.* 629–34, Trachalio, the *servus*, treats silphium and its product, the 'assafoetida', as gods, and he makes an oath on them. Sonnenschein's note ad *Rud.* 630 might justify the use of this plant as a subject for the vulgar mimes. Cf. also Collignon 1892, 280, n. 2. Mr. P.R. Jeffreys-Powell suggested to me that the title of the mime might

canticum is performed;[49] what may have been a popular song is transformed, through Trimalchio's involvement, into a vulgar spectacle.

After the second part of the zodiac dish is revealed to everyone's amazed eyes, the slaves start clapping to suggest to the guests that it was time they applauded as well (36.4; cf. the similar reaction of the household at 50.1 after the successful performance of the spectacle of the *Porcus Troianus*). Trimalchio seems pleased with his theatrical surprise (*methodium*, 36.5) and prepares himself for the performance of another trick on his guests, which he had no doubt repeated several times in the past (36.8; cf. 33.8). Carpus, probably a trained slave, enters at his master's order and slices the meat in pieces to the sound of music (36.6). By using repeatedly the vocative form of his cook's name Trimalchio both addresses him and orders him to perform his duty (36.8); this wordplay, not immediately understood and appreciated by Encolpius (36.7), shows Trimalchio's fondness for jests of any kind and belongs clearly in the tradition of the puns of the Roman popular theatre.[50] Cicero (*De Orat.* 2.259) mentions in connection with the mimes the popularity of jokes concerning words taken literally and not metaphorically:

> There is one more kind of joke which depends on language and is not dull at all; it is due to the fact that you seem to perceive an expression literally and not in the meaning intended: *The Guardian*, an old and entirely amusing mimic play, is full of just this kind of jokes. But enough of mimes; I just wanted this type of joke to be illustrated by some noteworthy and well-known example.

The whole scene, however, is being presented to the audience through Encolpius' conception of events as a gladiatorial show which makes a strong impression upon the guests. A common cook is being transformed into an *essedarius*, a chariot-fighter (36.6), whose skilful gesticulations are accompanied by a particular musical instrument, the water-organ (36.6). Since the *essedarius* was famous for his bravery and swiftness in action (Caes., *BG* 4.33), the metaphor shows clearly the skill of the cook.[51] Moreover, the reference to the *hydraulus* implies

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denote an importer of that plant's products, and that the mime might be set in an Italian sea-port or in an exotic place abroad.

[49] *extorsit* (35.6); see *Th.L.L.*, s.v. *extorqueo*, I.C.1. *taeterrima* (35.6); cf. 64.5, 64.9, 70.7.

[50] See Rosenblüth 1909, 42; Duckworth 1952, 345 ff.; G. Schmeling, "The Literary Use of Names in Petronius *Satyricon*", *Rivista di Studi Classici* 17 (1969), 8; Sandy 1974, 332, n. 7; ch. two, n. 89.

[51] See Rosati 1983, 215 and the equally skilful gestures of the *scissor* at Juv.,

the terribly noisy spectacle the cook must have created, since it was 'particularly suited to producing music of the imitative and virtuosic sort, free from harmonic restrictions and from any obligation of tonal coherence.'[52] We can imagine, therefore, that the dissonant sounds of the *symphonia* and the fast mimic movements of the cook would have made the slicing of the meat a dazzling spectacle.

Trimalchio's nonsensical lecture on astrology (39.5–15), which is delivered after he has assumed a particular pose, and let a period of time pass by (39.1–2), attempts to justify his pretentious belief that *oportet etiam inter cenandum philologiam nosse* 'one must not forget literary study even during dinner-time' (39.4).[53] His theories are explicitly connected, through a pseudo-sophisticated Vergilian quotation (39.3: "*sic notus Ulixes?*"), with the zodiac dish served earlier on (35.1–6; 36.1–4), and should be considered as treating astrological material in the same risible way as mimes may have been exploiting it. One should not expect examples of edifying education from Trimalchio's mouth as he praises himself with his usual arrogance during his absurd distribution of specific attributes to people according to their stellar signs (39.8). He identifies himself with the clever king of Ithaca (39.3; cf. 39.14: *nihil sine ratione facio*) but both in his tricks and in his speeches he creates a grotesque caricature of the Homeric hero rather than an equally cunning rival. In addition, this long 'academic' discourse serves the practical function of filling the time during which the household will prepare the appropriate scenic apparatus and get ready to decorate the dining-room fittingly for the ensuing spectacle of the *aper pilleatus*.

VI. *Aper pilleatus: Sat. 40.1–47.7*

Indeed, after the necessarily exaggerated compliments and applause of the host's incompetent wisdom (40.1), the servants cover the couches with coverlets which portray hunting-scenes and equipment (40.1). Of course, no explanation has been given in advance and the company

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5.120 ff., and cf. Mayor's note ad loc. Cf., also, Juv., 9.110, 11.136; *CIL* 9.466. On a cook's skilful gesticulations and the elevation of cookery from a slave's duty to a precious art see Livy, 39.6 and Rosati 1983, 213 and 216.

[52] G. Comotti, *Music in Greek and Roman Culture* (Baltimore / London: 1989) 73.

[53] On the occurrence of topics of popular philosophy on the popular farcical stage see Sandy 1974, 338; Horsfall 1989, 200; 208, n. 49.

is at a loss, being ignorant of the reason for the change of the theatrical setting (40.2). It has been rightly suggested that the deceptive atmosphere of wild forests created by the painted coverlets is meant to recall the décor of *venationes* in the amphitheatre produced by stage-machinery.[54] It also resembles that of the comic or mimic productions which had the necessary scenery painted on their backcloth (in the case of the mimes it was the *siparium*) during their performances. Like the breaking of the theatrical fiction in Plautine comedies through a direct address of the actor to the audience, the bafflement of Trimalchio's guests starts to gain realistic dimensions when they hear wild noises coming from outside and see, to their surprise, actual dogs, probably trained ones, intruding inside the *triclinium* (40.2); they do not seem, however, to be chasing a wild animal, for a huge wild boar on top of a tray comes *behind* them, not in front!

The elements which Trimalchio has combined in order to present in his unique manner the fourth course, derive their origin from the amphitheatre's world and from the elaborate Apician cookery. The entrance of the wild boar carefully reflects the techniques and routine of an arena whenever animal-hunting was practised. This metaphor will be continued later on in the imitation of bird-catching (40.5–6). The stuffed pig, *porcus Troianus*, took its place among the culinary delicacies of the Romans long before Trimalchio's dinner-party, and the boar in question belongs clearly in the same tradition, for numerous living fieldfares flew out when the cook cut his side (40.5). Extravagant culinary whims are transformed into spectacular pieces of public entertainment: the special servant who is appointed to cut the animal has a rough appearance (*barbatus ingens*, 40.5) and is dressed suitably for the occasion: *fasciis cruralibus alligatus et alicula subornatus polymita, strictoque venatorio cultro* 'with bands fastened on his knees, and dressed up with a light cloak of different colours, he drew a hunting-knife' (40.5). His gestures are skilfully performed in order to create the right impression (*vehementer percussit*, 40.5); fowlers had been waiting to play their part at a moment's notice (40.6). If these people were not already professionals hired for the occasion, it is remarkable to note what deeds Trimalchio has trained his household to

[54] See Jones (C.P.) 1991, 186–7. On animal-hunting in the arena see Balsdon 1969, 309–12; G. Ville, *La gladiature en occident à la mort de Domitien* (École française de Rome: 1981) 88–99, 106–16, 127–8, 168–73; Saylor 1987, 594 and n. 8. On the extravagant decoration of Roman banquet-backgrounds see Sen., *Ep.* 90.15 and Rosati 1983, 221.

enact in order to build an image of a host whose dishes (in this case, fieldfares) consist of first class fresh food astonishingly served.

Further details in the description of the *aper pilleatus* render it a stupidly comic sight: it appears to be a sort of hermaphrodite, for, even though Encolpius states clearly that pastry piglets, playing the part of *apophoreta* (40.4), were positioned around it as if they were sucking from it and so signified that the boar was a female one (*scrofa*) (40.4), he himself refers later on to the animal as male (41.1); the hilarious juxtaposition between the immensely big boar (*primae magnitudinis aper*, 40.3) and the tiny baskets (*sportellae*, 40.3) hanging from his teeth containing even smaller dates (40.3), ridicules the wild nature of the animal itself; the same effect is achieved by the mysterious presence of the cap (40.3),[55] a peculiarity which is absurdly broached by Encolpius as a highly important matter for speculation (41.1), but no adequate explanation could be provided despite his painful mental efforts (41.2). The *vetus conviva* is the last hope of satisfying his intellectual curiosity (41.2), and, indeed, the visitor, more familiar with Trimalchio's silly tricks, explains that the cap is a sign of the boar's being a freedman, because it was dismissed the previous day by the guests (41.4).[56] Both the interpreter's introductory remarks about the simplicity of the riddle (41.3), and the apparent sense the cap on the animal's head made after the explanation, created mock—psychological problems for Encolpius, because he started worrying about his mental abilities and the possible disastrous consequences this stupidity might have on his social life (41.5). The self-irony of the narrator is an endless source of subtle humour springing out of ludicrously odd situations.

There follows an impersonation of Bacchus which is the first of a series of imitations in the *Cena*: Trimalchio copies the gestures of the actor Syrus (52.9), Trimalchio imitates trumpets (64.5), a slave imitates a nightingale (68.3), Massa, the slave, imitates trumpeters (69.4) and pipe-players (69.5), Trimalchio's cook pretends to be the tragic actor Ephesus (70.13). A good-looking slave-boy with vine-leaves and ivy in his hair, two of Dionysus' conventional emblems, brings round

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[55] Baldwin, "Capping the boar", *Petronian Society Newsletter* 1.2 (1970), 3, refers to Gellius (*NA* 6.4.1), and suggests that the *pilleus* itself is a symbol for the deception and trickery which Trimalchio practises.

[56] Saylor 1987, 594, n. 9 notes that the word *dimissus* (41.4) 'belongs to the language of the games and would be used of a beaten gladiator granted life in the arena.' Thus Trimalchio's visual pun is two-fold: culinary and dramatic.

to the guests a small basket of grapes, and recites Trimalchio's poetical compositions (41.6; cf. 34.10). Following the tradition of all the reciters and singers at the *Cena*, the boy's voice is so shrill (41.6) that it must have pierced the audience's ears. This detail functions as a stage-direction, since it points out vividly the theatricality of the incident through the combination of vision and sound. It seems that subject-matter from Dionysus' life often provided instances of amusing imitations in dinner-parties or festivities.[57] The boy must have been performing three variations on the pantomime-theme of Dionysus (cf. Luc., *De Salt.* 39), whereby the slave has been playing the part of both the dancer and the chorus who accompanied with his song the gestures of the silent pantomime.[58] We can, therefore, tentatively suggest that there must have been different postures and gestures for Dionysus' pantomime as *Bromius*, *Lyaeus*, and *Euhius*, which need not necessarily be connected thematically with Trimalchio's poems. As is the case with most of the spectacles in the *Cena*, Trimalchio uses this one too to show off his tasteless humour in an arrogant manner (41.7–8).[59]

The ensuing five speeches of the freedmen (41.10–46.8) have formed the basis for the linguistic analysis of the *sermo vulgaris* of Petronius' time with all the necessary consequences that this study might have for the characterization of the particular fictional *personae*.[60] Without any doubt Petronius provides a faithful picture of the everyday language common people of his era spoke, and it is certainly not a coincidence that among the ancient literary genres only the theatre of the mimes portrayed human types speaking faithfully in the 'realistic' mode they would use if they were real people and not participants in a staged, imaginary farcical plot. We should not forget,

[57] Xen., *Symp.* 9.2–6 gives a detailed description of a pantomime-performance in a private house by a boy and a girl who by means of dance, gestures and words represented the love of Dionysus and Ariadne in a most touching manner. Velleius Paterculus, 2.82.4, describes the costume Mark Antony wore when he impersonated Dionysus in a procession at Alexandria to honour Cleopatra.

[58] Note the element of transformation and theatrical performance in the verbal terms *confessus* (41.6) (cf. Ovid, *Met.* 3.2; Stat., *Theb.* 2.122) and *traduxit* (41.6), which suggests that the slave perhaps sang and mimed Trimalchio's poems (cf. 126.6: *histrio scaenae ostentatione traductus*).

[59] See Smith 1975, ad 41.7–8 for the pun on the ambiguous *liber* / *Liber*. The same pun occurs in the comic stage: in Pl., *Capt.* (577–8), Tyndarus plays on the words *liber* (= free) and *Liber* (= a proper name). Cf. Pl., *Cist.* 127–8; and in satire see Hor., *S.* 1.4.89–90, and P.M. Brown, *Horace. Satires I* (Aris & Phillips: 1993) 134.

[60] See Boyce 1991, 76–94.

however, that the author of the novel does not aim at a linguistic classification or a pedantic recording of the lower classes' ordinary speech, but rather makes a character use specific wording and idioms only for this person's characterization in the overall frame of Trimalchio's vulgar dinner-party. Similarities in the way both Petronius and the theatre of the mimes used everyday language do exist, but due to the fragmentary state of the Roman mimic texts we cannot tell to what extent. One could also argue that in the whole theatrical, or even mimic, structure of the *Cena*, the freedmen's speech functions as the prosaic part (*diverbia*) a staged mime would have in juxtaposition with its musical pieces (*cantica*), represented by Trimalchio's continuous lyric entertainment. However, both the uneven way Trimalchio's spectacles and the freedmen's speeches are distributed within the entire frame of the events of the feast, as well as the fact that outside the *Cena* low-class persons (e.g. the Croton farm-bailiff, Chrysis, Giton) speak in a sophisticated and rhetorical manner, uncharacteristic of their social standing, argue against this theory.

It should be observed that Seleucus' moralising obsessions with death (42.1–7) and Ganymede's practical attitude towards life include proverbial sayings (42.4; 44.7), so favoured by the popular mimic stage.[61] Likewise, the passion of Echion, the *centonarius*,[62] for spectacles in the amphitheatre has had a clear impact on the way he sees life. Among other events to which he eagerly looks forward is the quarrel of the amphitheatre-audience occasioned by the adultery of Glyco's wife with his steward, Hermogenes (45.7: *videbis populi rixam inter zelotypos et amasiunculos*), and Glyco's revenge upon the innocent slave (45.8–9). Echion appears to classify real-life incidents (such as adultery) and the people involved in them (e.g. husband / jealous fool, adulterer / sweet lover) in the manner mimic stage productions had presented them: the jealous husband catches his faithless wife *in*

[61] See Herod., 1.15; Collignon 1892, 281; Horsfall 1989, 84.

[62] There is a mime *Centonarius* among the surviving titles of Laberius' mimes (24–5): see Bonaria 1965, 109. Baldwin, "Echion's profession in the *Satyricon*", *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica* 104 (1976), 327 notes that Laberius is the only literary example, other than Petronius, who uses the word *centonarius* to signify a certain profession, although no definite decision can be made as to the exact meaning of the word (one who extinguishes fires by using mats or a clothes-dealer?). Cf. also the peculiar way in which Echion expresses his satisfaction: "*modo sic, modo sic*" *inquit rusticus; varium porcum perdiderat* (45.2). Could he be quoting a line from a farcical staged event? Rosenblüth 1909, 54 compares the way in which Echion's son's teacher is sketched with the manner in which the character of the schoolmaster is described as a mimic type in Herodas 3 and in Philistion's (?) *Philogelos*.

flagrante delicto and after a *rixa* between him and the clever adulterer, revenge takes (or does not take) place. It is no wonder that people like Echion, who take the utmost pleasure in staged vulgar events, feel so much at home with Trimalchio's dinner-parties.

VII. *Porcus Troianus: Sat. 47.8–59.5*

Trimalchio had left the dining-room at 41.9 with the intention of relieving himself. When he returns at 47.1—putting a necessary end to the gossip of his freedmen-guests—he finds it proper not only to perform in public things which should have been done in private (that is, wash his hands: 47.1), but also, after a slight dramatic pause (47.1), to give an embarrassingly detailed account of his stomach-problems (47.2–6),[63] a comic monologue which produces open or suppressed laughter in his audience (47.5; 47.7). But, according to the omniscient narrator (47.8), Trimalchio has not said his last word yet, for a new complex culinary spectacle unfolds when the tables are cleaned to the sound of music (47.8; cf. 34.1) and three white pigs are brought in front of the company (47.8). The audience of the spectacle consists of the diners; the cast is Trimalchio (note his play-acting at 47.10–13; 49.3–5; 49.8), an announcer (47.8), a cook (47.11–13; 49.5–6; 49.9),[64] and four pigs, three of them alive (47.8) and one already cooked (49.1).

The usual pattern of music being employed for trivial duties of the household and for the spectacular introduction of the next course occurs again. The whole act is so carefully stage-directed and repeatedly performed in advance that Encolpius is completely fooled (47.9; 49.7); one can imagine the pseudo-religious overtones that Trimalchio

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[63] It seems that Trimalchio has similar stomach-problems to the ones that a character in a mime by Laberius has: see *Parilicii* 83 (Bonaria), and compare *Sat.* 47.3 with Sophron 46 (Kaibel).

[64] It is hardly necessary to mention that the cook was a standard figure in comedy and mime, Greek and Roman of all periods: see C. Gaskins Harcum, *Roman Cooks* (Baltimore: 1914); H. Dohm, *Mageiros. Die Rolle des Kochs in der Griechisch-römischen Komödie* (München: 1964). Preston 1915, 268 notes that 'the versatile and aggressive cook of Trimalchio (cf. 74.5; 70.12) has a strong family resemblance to the braggart cook in comedy' as represented in Plaut., *Pseud.* 790–890, *Aul.* 280–349. It is not essential to assume that Trimalchio's cook is based on a theatrical cook. It could equally well have been the case that Petronius created that character out of his mind, or took him from a non-theatrical genre (for example, satire), but he certainly provided him with histrionic talents worthy of his master's theatrical personality.

wants to convey to the image of his white pigs, and such an impression is reinforced when one notices that the pigs are ornamented with sacrificial emblems (*tintinnabulis culti*, 47.8) when they are led into the *triclinium*. Apart from the general custom of hanging bells round the neck of various animals mainly for ornamental purposes, bells (*tintinnabula*) had a religious significance: they were a preventive against evil influences.[65] In Trimalchio's case, the bells must have been intended to function on both levels of apotropaic religiosity and ridiculous decoration: note the jingling sounds they must have produced while the pigs were walking into the room. Furthermore, one observes another strange feature in the pigs' appearance: they wear *capistra* round their necks (47.8), which are halters or headstalls for controlling wild animals. We find such equipment used on horses and boars but not on tame pigs, whose wearing them would produce a risible spectacle. I suggest that this is the first reference to the gladiatorial image of the pigs that Trimalchio wants to add in the multi-levelled stage-direction of his fifth course. The pigs are presented as wild animals which have to be controlled in order to enter the arena, that is Trimalchio's dining-room. This image will be developed further later on when at 47.13 it is the pigs that lead the cook back to the kitchen like horses driving a carriage on their way out of the arena.

The *nomenculator*, a slave whose duty is usually to remind his forgetful master of people's names, announces the pigs' ages (47.8). This is the first time that Encolpius' premonitions will prove to be wrong, because, although he suspects that something related to the stage is going to happen, it turns out that the pigs are not trained animal-performers of the streets, as he had guessed (47.9).[66] No other reference to trained pigs and to the kind of gymnastics they would perform, seems to exist, but the subconscious connection in Encolpius' mind between the three pigs and the tricks of street-entertainers characterizes him as a person acquainted with the manifestations of low-life popular diversion.

Trimalchio then, like an actor in a Roman comedy, breaks the dramatic fiction and, scorning culinary practices which he himself

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[65] See *Dictionary of Antiquities*, s.v. *tintinnabulum*.

[66] On the *circulatores* 'street-entertainers' and their amazing tricks see Apul., *Met.* 1.4; *Digesta* 47.11.11; A. Booth, "Allusion to the *Circulator* by Persius and Horace?", *Greece and Rome* 27 (1980), 166–9; P.B. Corbett, *The Scurra* (Edinburgh: 1986) 55–6; Horsfall 1989, 84; Jones 1991, 187–9.

will use in other parts of his meal (74.5), directly addresses his audience, that is his guests, asking them to choose one of the three pigs to be cooked *immediately* (47.10). So far everything can be explained through the usual arrogance of the host who wants to show off his household's abilities (47.10), but then a strange thing happens: without waiting for an answer, Trimalchio calls his cook and not only chooses himself which pig shall be slaughtered but also picks the oldest one instead of the more tender meat of the younger ones (47.11). Trimalchio's play-acting continues successfully when he raises his voice (47.11: *clara voce*), and in a formal manner inquires into his cook's former post (47.11–12) only to end up mock-threatening him in case he does not fulfil his master's orders perfectly and as expected (47.13).[67] The cook gets the message which at first sight seems to be Trimalchio's tyranny over him (*potentiae admonitum*, 47.13), but is in fact the signal to prepare the entrance of the dish known as *porcus Troianus* (49.1). This dish is certainly not an innovation on Trimalchio's part, for Macrobius (*Sat.* 3.13.13) refers to it as already known in the mid-second century.

An angry face is not the proper behaviour of a host towards his guests, so Trimalchio adopts in an instant a polite and mild facial expression (48.1), which is, however, as false and pretend as the angry one was a moment before. His amusing chatting (48.1–8) includes, among others, a ridiculous discussion on rhetorical topics, an unhomeric travesty of how Odysseus outwitted the Cyclops, and finally the famous story of the Sibyl in the bottle, which Eliot used as a kind of introduction to his allegorical *Waste Land*. It is out of its farcical context, though, to interpret Trimalchio's monologue, and especially the Sibyl-scene (48.8), as a moralistic message of death,[68]

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[67] Note that Trimalchio at 47.13 uses the verb *ponere* in his pseudo-menacing warning *ut diligenter ponas*. This verb, usually meaning 'put', 'arrange' something, can be used as a technical theatrical term in the sense 'put on, stage a play' (Pers., 5.3; Cic., *Fam.* 10.32.3; Petr., 101.7). Thus one could argue that Trimalchio in fact tells the cook to provide a successfully-staged spectacle and not to fail his master's theatrical expectations.

[68] So H.H. Bacon, "The Sibyl in the bottle", *Virginia Quarterly Review* 34 (1958), 262–76 and H.D. Cameron, "The Sibyl in the *Satyricon*", *Classical Journal* 65 (1970), 337–9. In the same way, one should not search for truth in Trimalchio's version of the Cyclops and Ulysses (48.7), apart perhaps from the possibility that he has in mind mimic scenes of Homeric travesty of the kind found in the phlyax-vases. For a summary of the interpretations of the story see M. Coccia, "Il pollice di Ulisse (Petronio 48.7)", *Rivista di Cultura Classica e Medioevale* 20 (1978), 799–804; he takes the story not as Trimalchio's invention but as a reference to an incident in which

since its only actual function is to fill the time before the proper entrance of the already cooked pig (49.1).

Trimalchio has kept his word and serves the pig to his guests cooked immediately and bigger than when it was alive (49.2). He seems pleased with the rapidity with which his household executes its tasks, but then he begins to look more carefully (49.3) and realizes that something is wrong. One can easily visualize the changes in Trimalchio's facial expression, from pleasure when he sees the cooked pig brought in, through surprise, when he realizes that something is wrong, to anger, when he realizes the terrible mistake of the cook. It is not the puzzling growth of the pig's size that upsets him, but that it is not gutted (49.4). Could he have realized this just by looking at the cooked animal, or is this another clever example of Trimalchio's implicit stage-directions to advance the plot of his farce and deceive his audience? He perhaps makes some gestures in order to affirm his suspicions (49.4), and instantly orders not his cook's punishment (at least, not yet) but his explanation for that culpable forgetfulness (49.5). The cook looks appropriately sad and guilty (*tristis*, 49.5; *maestus*, 49.6), and when, since he was told to play his part, he offers no other excuse for his act apart from his bad memory (49.5), Trimalchio becomes furious and ruthlessly commands his flogging (49.5). It is remarkable that everyone in the company is so involved in watching the whole performance that no-one dares to doubt Trimalchio's intentions (especially since the torturers are already there: *non fit mora*, 49.6), or challenge the veracity of even simple facts: for example, would a cook ever forget to disembowel an animal before cooking it?

The scene is enacted in such a masterly way that it evokes the audience's live participation: the guests want the cook to be spared (note that they use gladiatorial dialect: *rogamus, mittas . . . nemo nostrum pro illo rogabit*, 49.6), while Encolpius feels that he has to express his sympathy towards his wronged host (49.7). For a second time he is fooled, because it is his wronged host that turns Encolpius' blood-

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the Cyclops cut Ulysses' thumb in order to prevent him from using the oars of a boat which would enable him to leave the monster's island. But, as Horsfall 1989, 80 rightly points out, 'the story . . . is not only an unhomeric phantasy but is in part lost to us through textual corruption.' Similarly, the ridiculous manner in which Trimalchio engages in rhetorical topics (48.4–6) reminds one of the mimic figure of the risible *scholasticus*, on whom see Rosenblüth 1909, 54; Sandy 1974, 339, n. 21, and cf. the opening scene of the novel (1–5).

thirsty expectations upside down by suggesting that the cook's sin can be forgotten on the mild condition that he should gut the animal in front of their very eyes (49.8). The change in Trimalchio's face from anger to relaxed smiling (49.8) is, of course, due not to the Senecan generosity of a domineering master towards his defenceless slaves, but to the arrogant satisfaction of a theatrical trickster that everything up to then had gone as planned and nothing could now stop the astonishing, though vulgar, finale. Indeed, when the cook, more than eagerly (*arripuit*, 49.9) but still pretending to be shocked (*timida manu*, 49.9) from his ordeal, cuts, like a victorious *bestiarius* in the arena, certain places on the pig's belly (49.9), the animal's guts, having being pressed all this time, flood out (49.10). The audience's admiration of the act, though they must have realized by then that everything was planned in advance and that they were being outwitted by their host's dramatic ambitions, is completed when they realize that the stomach has already been miraculously made into sausages and similar products of pig's guts (49.10). Once more the trained slaves have to start applauding (50.1; cf. 36.4) to show that the trick[69] has reached its end successfully and the guests must show their gratitude to Trimalchio's histrionic abilities. The diners—like the audience of an amphitheatre—express their formal thanks to the producer of the spectacles, Trimalchio (*Gaio feliciter*, 50.1). For his

[69] Notice that the narrator uses the technical term *automatum* (50.1) to characterize Trimalchio's staged serving of sausages and black puddings. This word occurs twice more in the novel, the first time in the same sense of an automatic contrivance (54.4), and the second time to show the puppet-like nature of the movements of the sexual intercourse between Eumolpus and Philomela's daughter (140.11). Suetonius (*Claud.* 34.2) mentions that Claudius' favourite parts of a spectacle were *automatum vel pegma*, elaborated structures with several movable storeys meant to produce the stage-effects necessary for the audience's amusement. Juvenal (4.122) mentions the machine and the boys that are ejected from it towards the curtains, and Martial (*Spect.* 2.2) testifies to the height of these scaffolds. Seneca (*Ep.* 88.22) gives an extraordinary account of what this machinery could do. We know, also, of Heron of Alexandria, a mathematician and inventor, whose *floruit* was around 62 A.D., very near to the supposed date of the novel's composition. Among other treatises he wrote one called *On Automata-making*, mostly on the construction of miracle-working devices used especially in temples; nevertheless, these could have equally well worked on stage as well. Could it be that the learned Arbiter of Elegance knew of such things and deliberately inserted them in his novel, not only here but also later on when the ceiling of Trimalchio's house opens in two and lets presents for the guests come down? Encolpius' use, though, of this term seems to suggest that Petronius may have been familiar with the stage even as far as the practical part of a performance (scenery, etc.) was concerned. For a detailed discussion of the term *automatum* and its function in the novel see R. Dimundo, "Petronio 50.1: una proposta ermeneutica", *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia di Bari* 30 (1987), 208–14.

exceptionally convincing acting, the cook is offered a drink and a silver crown (50.1). The *porcus Troianus* is, we see, not itself original to Trimalchio's menu, but such an elaborate way to present an ordinary culinary achievement can surely be characterized as farce with elements of amphitheatre-shows in it.[70]

The motif of drunkenness has already been used earlier in the novel and will continue to be a source of laughter and theatrical surprise.[71] The drunkard's condition has undoubtedly been exploited several times by the farcical stage for comic effects,[72] and so it happens in the *Satyrica* when, in a happy state of near drunkenness (52.8), Trimalchio encourages the introduction of more wine, with everyone's appreciative compliments (52.7), and invites his wife to dance a lascivious mimic dance, the κόρδαξ;[73] he insists that everyone should add their persuasions, since Fortunata, a former flute-girl (74.13), like a mimic actress, is expert in forms of indecent dancing (52.8). At the same time he proceeds laughably to imitate the favourite movements of Syrus, an actor (*erectis supra frontem manibus*, 52.9), with the choral accompaniment of the whole household (52.9).[74] The mere imitation would have been followed by a further disgraceful performance by Trimalchio (52.10), had not Fortunata intervened and censured this foolishness which she thought below her husband's dignity (52.10). The comic details of the event are not only the pseudo-respectable discretion Fortunata uses (*ad aurem accessisset*, 52.10) or, indeed, the contradiction of her later desires (*iam coeperat Fortunata velle saltare*, 70.10), but also Trimalchio's inner conflict between his unseemly wishes and the social requirements of his wife (52.11).

So far there has not been scholarly agreement about the precise meaning or the origin of what the slaves sang in chorus in accompaniment to Trimalchio's mimic gestures (*madeia perimadeia*, 52.9).[75]

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[70] See the comparison that Saylor 1987, 594–5 makes between this incident and a gladiatorial event.

[71] See ch. two, n. 93, and cf. Preston 1915, 264 who connects Trimalchio's drunkenness with the same recurrent motif in mimes and Roman Comedy.

[72] See F.F. Abbott, "The use of language as a means of characterization in Petronius", *Classical Philology* 2 (1907), 49.

[73] See Sandy 1974, 337, n. 16.

[74] For a lengthy discussion of the identity of this Syrus and his possible identification with the mimographer and actor P. Syrus see Giancotti 1967, 231–4. Schmeling 1969(b), 6 draws attention to the use of the name *Syrus* as a typical slave's name in the Roman comedies (Pl., *Pseud.*; Ter., *Ad.*). Cf. the slaves' impersonations of the dancers Hegea and Diodorus in Pl., *Per.* 757 ff.

[75] See P. Perrochat, *Pétrone. Le Festin de Trimalcion* (Paris: 1952) 84. A full list of

What is remarkable, however, is the synchronization with which the slaves responded to their master's theatrical follies. Whether visualized as the lyric part of a mime or the chorus of a pantomime which sings what the actor (i.e. Trimalchio) expresses in movements, one cannot but admire the perfect timing and training of the *familia*, and visualize easily the outrageousness of the scene which betrays Trimalchio's superficial and ridiculous involvement in the professional world of histrionics.

Acrobats or *petauristarii* are seen by Encolpius as a source of relief (*tandem*, 53.11) from the boredom caused by the reading of the 'court-circular' (53.2–10), a pompous bureaucratic document which turned Trimalchio from his desire to dance (53.1). The name of these entertainers is derived from the *petaurum*, an apparatus, like a trapeze, used in performing various skilful exercises.[76] They were a regular source of entertainment at dinners (Encolpius is certain at 47.9 and 60.2 that they would appear) providing amazing spectacles, if we are to believe Martial (*Ep.* 5.12.3–4) who mentions that 'huge Ninus with all the strength of his arms lifts seven boys, or even eight'. From 47.9 we can assume that they also performed in the streets, accompanied by well-trained animals who executed wonderful tricks or amazing gymnastics.[77] At Trimalchio's dinner there are various parts to the spectacle. Someone, perhaps the leader of the group, who was characterized, probably from his physical appearance and the expression on his face, as *baro insulsissimus* (53.11),[78] was firmly holding

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emendations suggested can be found in Bonaria 1965, 88; Gagliardi 1967, 232–3, n. 3. A. DE Lorenzi, "*Madeia Perimadeia* in Petronio e un mimo perduto di P. Siro", *Rivista Indo-Greca-Italica di Filologia* 13 (1929), 10–1 identifies the words *madeia perimadeia* with the names of the famous witches Μήδεια and Περιμήδεια, and speculates that Trimalchio and his household performed a mime in order to invite Fortunata to dance. Most of the interpretations given by scholars, including the one just quoted, are so imaginative and diverse that Bonaria 1965, 139 rightly concludes: 'Forse la miglior conclusione è quella del Collignon . . . , del Maiuri e di Ernout-Meillet . . . , i quali affermano di ignorare l' origine e il significato dei due vocaboli e che è vano tentare di capirne qualche cosa.'

[76] See Festus, 250 L; on the *petaurum* see Väterlein 1976, 49.

[77] See Horsfall 1989, 84; cf. A. Scobie, "Storytellers, storytelling, and the novel in the Graeco-Roman antiquity", *Rheinisches Museum* N.F. 122 (1979), 233; Booth 1980, 166–9.

[78] The word *baro* will be used of the brave *hominem Cappadocem* (63.7) in the story of the witches. On its etymology C. Pellegrino, *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon* (Roma: 1975) 314 quotes Isidore (*Etym.* 9.4.31: *barones Graeco nomine, quod sint fortes in laboribus.* Βαρὺς *enim dicitur gravis, quod est fortis*). This noun certainly refers both to the physical strength of the acrobat and his stupidity (cf. Cic., *Div.* 2.144; Lucil., 1121 M). With the mention of this detail the whole professional show of the acrobats becomes a ridicu-

a ladder and ordered another acrobat to jump from rung to rung with dancing movements. When he reached the top of the ladder he danced to the accompaniment of a song;[79] afterwards, he jumped through burning hoops and picked up a wine-jar holding it with his teeth (53.11). All these tricks, however, seem to be a boring and hackneyed performance, for Encolpius notes that *mirabatur haec solus Trimalchio* 'only Trimalchio admired these events' (53.12). Thus it is made clear that the spectacle was a tedious one.

Once more a popular show becomes a trivial sight prized only by the vulgar taste of Trimalchio, who, pretending to be a 'connoisseur' of shows, declares in a pretentiously bitter tone that acrobats are not usually received with the appropriate appreciation (53.12). He then goes on to condemn in a generalising manner all the spectacles apart from *petauristarios et cornic<in>es* (53.12).[80] In spite of a multitude of Greek elements in his dinner-party, he wants to be represented here as a supporter of native Latin culture and not of foreign Greek influences. For the first time Trimalchio expresses openly his theatrical and musical taste: *'nam et comoedos' inquit 'emeram, sed malui illos Atell<ani>am facere, et choraulen meum iussi Latine cantare'* '"For I had even bought" he said "a troupe of Greek actors, but I preferred them to perform Atellan farces; I also ordered my pipe-player to play Latin songs".' (53.13).[81] Trimalchio's predilection for Latin melodies and low farce with slapstick elements indirectly suggests that this is the sort of musical and theatrical entertainment one must expect to find at his dinner-party.

The spectacle of the acrobats takes an unexpected turn in the development of events at Trimalchio's feast. When all of a sudden

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lous performance of not very skilful blockheads (the acrobat is going to fall at 54.1). This sense of stupidity is intensified by the superlative *insulsissimus*, 53.11; cf. 23.2, Cic., *Tusc.* 1.15, Catul., 17.12. Certainly, the mental abilities of those people reflect the mental abilities of the person who hired or owned them, i.e. Trimalchio.

[79] *odaria saltare*, 53.11; Pellegrino 1975, 314 quotes Hor., *S.* 1.5.63 (*saltare Cyclopa*) and notes that '*salto* con l' accus. indica la figura rappresentata nella danza.'; cf. Kokolakis 1959, 12, n. 9; Brown 1993, 146. This implies that Trimalchio's acrobat must have performed a kind of pantomimic dance.

[80] On his partiality for cornicines cf. 78.5–6. Trimalchio's statement is not absolutely true. He is fond of other pieces of entertainment as well: imitations of musicians (64.5), gladiatorial shows (52.3; 71.6), all sorts of games (27.2–3; 33.2; 64.11–12). Bücheler's deletion of *animalia* (53.12) should not be adopted since the word makes a contrast with *rebus humanis* mentioned earlier on (53.12). On gladiators in the *Cena* see Horsfall 1989, 84–5.

[81] Trimalchio uses, comically enough, Greek words (*comoedos*, *choraulen*, 53.13) to show his preference for Roman culture!

the young slave, who was performing the acrobatics, fell somewhere on Trimalchio's fat body (that place turns out to be his arm, *bracchium*, 54.2),[82] a melodramatic scene is created in which everyone, except the suspicious Encolpius, participates in an excessively heart-rending manner.[83] Everything seems exaggerated and unnatural to Encolpius, who, having learned his lesson well from previous staged incidents during the feast, expects at any moment a new trick to appear and give a sensational ending to the whole spectacle of the acrobats: *pessime mihi erat, ne his precibus per <rid>iculum aliquid catastropha quaereretur* 'I was very worried that by means of his pleadings a 'coup de théâtre' was aimed at somehow jokingly' (54.3).[84] Once more the slave, who committed the sin, constantly begs for forgiveness,[85] while another slave is being beaten for not bandaging Trimalchio's arm with the right colour of wool. Both these facts in combination with the incident of the cook who had purposely omitted to disembowel a pig in order to produce an unexpected and impressive spectacle (an incident which Encolpius had taken seriously and had, therefore, made a fool of himself; see 49.1–10), force Encolpius to watch out for some automatic contrivance (*automatum*, 54.4), which would justify his suspicion that the whole thing was set up from the beginning.[86] Nothing of the sort, however, happens. The surprise of this episode (there

[82] For possible sources of inspiration for this incident see Baldwin, "Careless boys in the *Satyricon*", *Latomus* 44 (1985), 847–8; "Catch A Falling Star: Petronius, *Sat.*, 54.1", *Petronian Society Newsletter* 20.1&2 (1990), 8.

[83] *conclamavit familia, nec minus convivae* (54.1); *ipse Trimalchio cum graviter ingemuisset* (54.2); *concurrere medici, et inter primos Fortunata crinibus passis cum scypho, miseramque se atque infelicem proclamavit* (54.2). Preston 1915, 263 thinks that the fall of the acrobat adds to the farcicality of the whole scene. Note the ironically mentioned detail of the *scyphus* (54.2) which indicates Fortunata's bibulous nature.

[84] Encolpius is using the word *catastropha* in its technical theatrical sense of the last part in a comedy. See Evanthius, *De Fabula* 4.5; Donatus, *De Comoedia* 7.1. Cf. also Don. on Ter., *Andr.* 796, 849, 915; *Phorm.* 179; *Hec.* 488, 567, 623, 799; Juv., 4.122 and see Duff 1970 and Mayor ad loc.; Collignon 1892, 276. The *Th.L.L.*, s.v., 3 quotes the Schol. Juv., 4.122: *per catastropham aut de pegmate excussos*, thus implying that *catastropha* can also be a theatrical machine. This should not be surprising in the particular context, since Trimalchio's house is fully equipped with machinery used in the theatre (dividing ceiling, automata, etc.). Cf. Polyb., 3.48.8; Her., *Aut.* 22.6.

[85] Note that the expression *missionem rogare* (54.3), which the slave uses in order to be forgiven, is a stock phrase in the language of gladiators who lost the fight: Livy, 41.20.12; Sen., *Contr.* 9.6.2; Mart., *Ep.* 12.28.7; Suet., *Aug.* 45.3. Cf. Petr., 52.5.

[86] Despite the ambiguous *tamquam laesum* (54.2), we cannot be sure if Trimalchio pretended to be in pain, or if the boy fell on purpose in order to give an opportunity to Trimalchio to show off his generosity, or even if Petronius created the whole episode as a reminiscence of a real-life incident in Nero's life (see Smith 1975, ad

has to be one) is that Trimalchio is not angry at all with the slave, but gives orders for him to be manumitted (54.5) and uses the incident as an opportunity to create an epigram on the hackneyed theme of the instability which rules the fate of men (55.2–3).

This epigram gives rise to a serious (!) discussion on a whole series of poets, among whom a certain Mopsus from Thrace (unknown today, if he ever existed) was considered the leading figure (55.4). Trimalchio then puts forward quite unexpectedly the academic topic of the stylistic differences between Cicero and the mimographer Publilius Syrus (55.5), only to ignore, as usual, a possible answer from his audience, and proceeds to express both his own pseudo-authoritative opinion on the subject (55.5) and the recitation of what is generally believed to be a Petronian (or, even better, Trimalchionesque) imitation of the Publilian style (55.6.1–16).[87] The function of the poem is to draw the frequent Petronian antithesis between the content of the narrative itself and the actual practices of the person who speaks, in other words, Trimalchio's tirade against luxury and his own luxurious life; but in order for this to be made clear there is no need to assume the genuineness of the poem. The question inevitably

loc.). The certain thing is that Trimalchio again gets hold of the situation, deliberate or not, and uses it to show off his liberal treatment of his slaves (cf., however, 52.4–5) and his mediocre poetical compositions on conventional topics.

[87] The scholarly dispute on whether this poem is an original Publilian citation or not is a long one. The lengthiest discussion of the passage is in the study of the mimes of Laberius and P. Syrus by Giancotti 1967, 238–74. His discussion is stimulating but not entirely convincing, since in his final, rather fanciful, speculation, he decides to attribute the authorship of the fragment to Cicero's well-known challenger, Laberius. Certainly the poem must be seen in the same absurd light of the comparison between the rhetorician and the mimographer (55.5). However, Sandy, "Publilius Syrus and *Satyricon* 55.5–6", *Rheinisches Museum* 119 (1976), 286–7, and before him Cèbe 1966, 331–2, n. 3, have argued for the seriousness of this comparison and, consequently, the authenticity of the poem as a Publilian product. But it would be strange to find here the unique example in the surviving novel of a genuine quotation without parodic intentions, and, although Sandy's arguments are not without force, it is too simplistic to classify this poem among our scanty mimic fragments, especially since its source is ambivalent Petronian humour. Moreover, it would be incongruous if Trimalchio remembered all these lines here, but at 50.5 provided an absurd account on Hannibal, the siege of Troy and Corinthian pottery. See, also, his mythological travesties at 52.1–2. Baldwin, "Trimalchio and Maecenas", *Latomus* 43 (1984), 402–3 argues that neither Varro nor any other mimographer is the author of the poem which Trimalchio recites, but that this composition is a parody of Maecenas' poetry. E. Courtney, *The Poems of Petronius* (Atlanta, Georgia: 1991) 21 suggests that Petronius' motive for the introduction of these lines was 'to parody the quite frequent use of quotations from Publilius by Seneca to illustrate his moral teaching'.

remains open, while the fact that this topic should be regarded as an arrogant whim of Trimalchio, who takes pleasure in touching superficially sophisticated clichés and forgets them when it suits him, is evident from the abrupt ease with which he passes on to the discussion about professions (56.1). The materialistic and simplistic criteria by which Trimalchio evaluates professions and animals, and his absurd connection of these, may point to the nonsensical manner in which mimic productions could have exploited similar serious discourses.[88] The conventional offer of yet more *apophoreta* (56.8–9; cf. 40.4; 60.3–4) interrupts Trimalchio's academic aspirations and gives him the chance to practise his colloquial humour with Latin puns like these which abound in the farcical stage.

The spectacle of the *Homeristae* is formally introduced at 59.2 by Trimalchio as a means of dissolving the hostile atmosphere that had been created by Hermeros' tirade against Ascyltus and Giton (57.1–58.14). A group of actors performing an *acroama* at a dinner is hardly an innovation.[89] The *Homeristae* were low-class declaimers of Homeric themes, who appeared in theatres and used cheap but impressive tricks in their performances, such as retractable daggers or false blood. These performers, not to be confused with rhapsodists, seem to have appeared on stage for the first time in the time of Demetrius of Phaleron and, apart from Petronius' novel, they appear in our surviving sources only in public celebrations.[90] We do not know whether Trimalchio has hired their services for that night or owns this particular group of actors.[91] They enter equipped with the appropriate Homeric costume and signal the beginning of their performance by a clash of the spear on the shield (59.3; cf. the similar sound the *cymbalistria* makes in Quartilla's theatrical orgy at 22.6), a sign which harmonizes with the epic character of the following plot. During the performance a considerable din must have been produced, because,

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[88] See Sandy 1974, 338.

[89] See Horsfall 1989, 87, n. 61.

[90] See A. Calderini, "'Ὁμηρισταί", *Rendiconti del Istituto Lombardo* 44 (1911), 713–23; W. Kroll, "Homeristae", in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* Supplementband 3, ed. G. Wissowa et al. (Stuttgart: 1918) 1158; W. Heraeus, "Drei Fragmente eines Grammatikers Ovidius Naso?", *Rheinisches Museum* N.F. 79 (1930), 395–403; Sandy 1974, 334; R.J. Starr, "Trimalchio's *Homeristae*", *Latomus* 46 (1987), 199–200.

[91] At 53.13 Trimalchio boasts of his own *choraules* and the *comoedos* he bought in order to perform Atellan farces. It is nowhere stated that he owns the *Homeristae*, as Starr 1987, 199 affirms.

in addition to the actors who are conversing in Greek (59.3), Trimalchio sits on a cushion and provides the equivalent of subtitles for those who did not understand Greek by reading excerpts from the Homeric text in Latin in a droning voice (*canora voce*, 59.3). Thus the pause that follows the end of the performance (59.3), dramatically inserted to evoke admiration and amazement from the audience, creates a sharp contrast between the loud noise and the complete silence.

The ensuing summary of the *fabula*[92] is a senseless exposition of distorted events from Greek mythology. This absurd version of the Trojan war is reminiscent of the mythological travesties which one finds in the Atellan farce or the mimes.[93] However, one should perceive the plot of the performance as based on Trimalchio's personal 'script', composed and adapted in order to fulfil specific aims in his staged dinner-party, rather than on an actual Atellan 'script' which could be regarded as one more *testimonium* for this dramatic form. The reason for the narration of the summary is Trimalchio's constant desire to show off in every way he can, thus upstaging the actors. Likewise, the comic point of the outrageous Homeric version is that it shows Trimalchio's conceited semi-literacy which becomes a cause for his ridicule and his audience's amusement.[94]

VIII. *Vitulus galleatus: Sat. 59.6–64.13*

Everything, however, seems carefully staged in advance, when one notices the mention of Ajax as the last person in the hotch-potch (59.5), and the 'skit' of the insane Ajax coming from the kitchen (59.7): this character is seemingly introduced in the scene in order to finish off the performance,[95] but his actual function is to serve the next course in a spectacular way. The spectacle of the mad Ajax

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[92] Trimalchio uses (59.4) the technical theatrical term for 'play, drama'; cf. Suet., *Nero* 46.3, Cic., *Tusc.* 4.63.

[93] See Heraeus 1930, 395–402; Sandy 1974, 334, n. 10.

[94] Cf. the obscure story of Ulysses and the Cyclops (48.7) and Trimalchio's comically arrogant statement: *solebam haec ego puer apud Homerum legere* (48.7). Slater 1990(b), 72 wrongly thinks that Trimalchio's arrogance here indicates 'a distrust of the intelligibility of either performance or reading as a medium of communication.'

[95] Trimalchio's expression *argumentum explicabit* (59.5) is a technical formula for the unfolding or finishing off of a theatrical plot on stage; cf. Cic., *N.D.* 1.53; Suet., *Calig.* 57.4.

serves as the concluding piece (59.5) of the performance of the *Homeristae*. In order to continue the show and keep the pretence that a madman is advancing towards them, the fellow-actors start shouting and the household runs about (59.6) creating an atmosphere of panic in the room. An enormous calf is brought in wearing a helmet (59.6), and the cook attacks and cuts it in slices (59.7) just as Ajax was supposed to have killed herds and flocks of farm animals in his madness. The whole scene must have been rather boring, since it is ironically characterized as a skilful and impressive performance (*tam elegantes strophas*, 60.1; note, also, the subtle irony conveyed in the description of the other guests' amazement at such an event: *mirantibus*, 59.7; *mirari*, 60.1). Although Trimalchio's Carpus (36.5–8) and Virro's carver (Juv., 5.118–24) clearly demonstrate that even the serving of food had become a specialized 'art', the disguise of a trained cook as a legendary hero with a sword (59.7) instead of a kitchen-knife is certainly meant to be seen as a typical pantomimic performance of well-known subject-matter with well-rehearsed accompanying gestures (*modo versa modo supina gesticulatus*, 59.7).[96] Trimalchio is not interested in providing a hackneyed pantomime just for its own sake or for his guests' amusement, but uses the spectacle for personal purposes (to serve the food), and aims not so much at the satisfaction of his audience's hunger as at its admiration of his staging abilities.

A ceiling that opens in order to let flowers, unguents or other presents be offered to unsuspecting and surprised guests was a fairly frequent device used in the dining-rooms of extravagant Romans. Examples more striking than Trimalchio's have been recorded by Roman historians,[97] and Seneca (*Ep.* 90.15) scathingly mentions the extremes this form of entertainment could take as a sign of *sapientia* among the corrupt wealthy circles of his time. Trimalchio's *automatum* which would disclose a new exciting theatrical surprise is described

[96] *gesticulatus* (59.7), 'to make mimic gestures'; cf. Apul., *Flor.* 18; Suet., *Nero* 42.2. Lucian, *De Saltat.* 46 lists among other pantomime-subjects καὶ ἡ Αἴαντος μανία. He also describes in detail (ibid. 83–4) an incident in which a pantomime-dancer exaggerated so much when he was pretending to be the mad Ajax, that he was thought himself insane. In Atellan farce see Pomponius' *Armorum Iudicium*, 10–1, with Frassinetti's note, 1967, 101–2, who connects it with Pacuvius' *Armorum Iudicium*. In Pl., *Capt.* (615), Tyndarus wants to convince Hegio that Aristophontes is a madman, and for this reason he compares him with the figure of the insane Ajax on stage. Gagliardi 1980, 79 speculates that this scene may be an example of a mythological mime, adapted to the context of Trimalchio's purposes.

[97] See Suet., *Nero* 31; Val. Max., 9.1.5; Macr., *S.* 3.13.8; Smith 1975, ad 60.1; Rosati 1983, 221–2.

like an earthquake (60.1). It is interesting to note that everyone in the company, even the naive Encolpius, has become familiar with Trimalchio's staged follies and, although they certainly have feelings of fear about this strange and sudden noise from the ceiling, they expect, with the awe of a circus-audience, an innovation or, more specifically, an acrobatic performer (60.2), rather than some physical convulsion. This device with hidden entrances and spectacular effects, although not unusual, proves that Trimalchio has transformed his house into a stage, not only metaphorically through the constant use of farcical incidents and staged events, but also literally through the use of the actual theatrical apparatus frequently employed in the amphitheatre: the elaborate devices of the earth in the well-known spectacles recorded by Apuleius (*Met.* 10.34) and Calpurnius Siculus (*Ecl.* 7.69–72) are characteristic examples of this usage.[98] Moreover, the repeated pattern of Trimalchio's dramatic surprises (an unsuspected item hidden in unexpected places: 33.8; 40.5; 49.10; 60.3; 70.6) squares with the theatrical practice of mimic actors making sudden entrances on stage from behind their mimic curtain.[99]

The dish with Priapus' image holding all kinds of fruit and grapes in his lap seems to have been placed quietly on the table during the time when the guests were busy collecting their presents from the huge hoop, so as to confront them with another pleasant surprise. This dish is visually astonishing, since it combines exotic food (*omnis generis poma*, 60.4) with amusing obscenity,[100] but its pleasing peculiarity lies in the hidden saffron which the fruit contains and which is released when it is even slightly touched (60.6). This comic scene is another example of the way Trimalchio makes fun of his visitors, and it becomes purely farcical when one notices the avid gestures of the greedy guests (including Encolpius on Giton's behalf) (60.5; 60.7) and their ridiculous misinterpretation as a religious sign of what is only a vulgar trick in the tradition of the theatrical *automata* (60.7).[101]

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[98] See H.S. Gehman, "Moving pictures among the Romans", *Classical World* 15 (1922), 98–100; Saylor 1987, 596 and n. 14. On the μηχανή of the Greek tragedy see G. Arnott, *Greek Scenic Conventions in the fifth century B.C.* (Oxford: 1962) 72–8.

[99] See Schol. Juv., 8.186, and Sandy 1974, 337.

[100] *more vulgato* (60.4), and see Smith 1975, ad loc.

[101] On the travesty of ceremonial elements in 60.1–9 see Rosati 1983, 224; J.F. Miller, "A travesty of ritual in Petronius (*Satyricon* 60)", *Hermes* 117 (1989), 192–202.

Trimalchio's appeal for entertainment to one of his old *scurrae*,[102] Niceros (61.2; the other one is Plocamus, 64.2), introduces in a conventional manner the common motif of the interpolated narrative within a text,[103] namely the chilling stories of the werewolf (61.6–62.14) and the witch-like demons (63.3–10). Niceros is reluctant to start speaking, because he is afraid that the *scholastici*, that is, Agamemnon and his company, will laugh at him (61.4), and this hesitation has rightly been interpreted as a traditional technique to introduce a story. Choricius (*Apol. Mimorum* 109), however, mentions that the mimes exploited the comic contrast between the speech of an uneducated and that of a learned person for instructive purposes:

> You can also see soldiers, and listen to orators, and sometimes to two mimes, one of them imitating some uneducated person, and the other a learned one, the result being that, when the former is ridiculed, while the latter is applauded, the spectators consider that they must pursue education, in order to be praised, and avoid illiteracy, so that they may not give cause for insulting jokes.

Niceros' story has been extensively analysed as both a folk-tale and a source of colloquial Latin.[104] It is remarkable, however, that it appears also in native Italian drama: in Novius' *fabula Atellana*, *Fullones Feriati* (31–33 Frassinetti), we read:

> *I. vortit se in omnis bestias, comest quidquid tetigit tantum*
> *II. nihil est pericli: dabo tibi validum virum / animosum*
> I. he is transformed into all animals, he devours everything that he just touches
> II. there is no danger: I will give you a strong and brave man

The motifs of transformation and of the courageous road-companion can be easily recognised, although they do not offer any further similarity to the Petronian narrative; but it has been suggested that both in Novius and Petronius the story is introduced in the same context

[102] On the theatrical nature of this figure see Sandy 1974, 330; Corbett 1986, passim.

[103] On story-telling as a conventional form of entertainment at dinner-parties see Horsfall 1989, 194–5. On the tradition of the particular subjects of the werewolf and the *strigae* see M. Schuster, "Der Werwolf und die Hexen. Zwei Schauermärchen bei Petronius", *Wiener Studien* 48 (1930), 149–78; Horsfall 1989, 196–7.

[104] See Boyce 1991, 85–7 (with bibliography on p. 85, n. 29); on the development of the werewolf-story from earlier myth into literary narrative see R. Valenti-Pagnini, "*Lupus in fabula.* Trasformazioni narrative di un mito", *Bollettino di Studi Latini* 11 (1981), 3–22.

of an interpolated narrative within a staged banquet:[105] the banquet of the fullers who are on holiday, and the banquet of Trimalchio. Indeed, the author records the story-teller's own emotions during the dramatic time of the plot,[106] as well as commenting ironically on the feelings of admiration and superstitious fear which both stories evoked in the guests (63.1; 64.1), as if he were describing the adventures of an actor performing on stage, and the reactions of an audience listening to him.

Through Trimalchio's address to his other *scurra*, Plocamus, urging him to amuse them in his usual manner (64.2), we are informed what additional forms of dramatic entertainment Trimalchio's past dinners have presented: recitations of comic dialogues to the accompaniment of music and the interspersing of lyric songs (*canturire belle deverbia, adicere melica[m]*, 64.2; *quid deverbia?*, 64.4) may point to the enacting of comedies, or, even more specifically, mimes, which usually consisted of these two ingredients, dialogue and songs (cf. the possible recitation of excerpts from the *Laserpiciarius* at 35.6 and the vulgar *ludus* of Vergil's recitation at 68.4–5). Pantomimic dance (*Quid saltare?*, 64.4) or impersonations (*quid tonstrinum?*, 64.4) could have been easily added to the programme, since they form part of the current dinner (41.6; 52.8–10; 64.5; 68.3).

The dog-fight at Trimalchio's dinner is one of the most amusingly described spectacles in the *Cena*. After Trimalchio's mimicry of the trumpeters, the narrator focuses his interest on Trimalchio's favourite (he had appeared for the first time at 28.4), a bleary-eyed ugly creature whose dog constitutes another spectacular example of vulgarity. The name of the dog, Margarita ('Pearl') (64.9),[107] harmonizes with the innuendos of wealth implicit in the name of her master, Croesus (64.5). The dog is small but unusually and indecently fat (64.6), probably because Croesus has always been feeding her as he does at 64.6. The image of the boy who insists on stuffing the dog's mouth

[105] The interpretation of these fragments was first made by Rossbach, "Atellanen des L. Pomponius und des Novius", *Wochenschrift für klassische Philologie* 37 (1920), 331 ff., followed by Frassinetti 1967, 109–10.

[106] Cf. Niceros' reaction at 62.5, *mihi [in] anima in naso esse, stabam tamquam mortuus*, and Herod., 3.3–4, ἄχρις ἡ ψυχή / αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ χειλέων μοῦνον ἡ κακὴ λειφθῇ. Rosenblüth 1909, 55 discerns characteristics of a mimic type in Niceros' character.

[107] There is a gravestone for a dog named Margarita in *CIL* 6.29896; cf. 64.7 with line 8 of this epigram and with Pl., *Sti.* 620. All the passages refer to a small and sweet dog, nothing like Trimalchio's monster.

with a piece of bread half a pound in weight,[108] while the dog keeps refusing it and is about to vomit (64.6), evokes not only disgust, but also laughter. The whole situation becomes worse for the dog, since she is wrapped in a piece of cloth (64.6).[109] The sight of Croesus fulfilling his duty towards Margarita reminds Trimalchio of his own responsibilities and, consequently, of his dog, Scylax. The 'Puppy' (a comic contrast between the name and the size of the dog) is the very opposite in size to Margarita (64.7), but does not appear intelligent (64.7). A scene of jealousy follows, because Trimalchio had not fully appreciated the affection shown to him by Croesus (64.8–9); in order to take revenge, the latter absurdly urges Margarita to attack Scylax. The outcome of this fight is an awful noise filling the room (64.9, 10), Margarita's near dismemberment (64.9), the smashing of all the crystal in the room and the wounds that the hot oil from the lamp caused to some of the guests (64.10). This set-to is described in a highly dramatic manner in order to create the impression of a fight of wild animals in an amphitheatre. More brawls of a similar kind will ensue: the fracas at the inn between Eumolpus and some of the lodgers (95.4–96.6); the mimic fight which will be staged on board Lichas' ship between Encolpius and his friends and the sailors with the help of Tryphaena's household (108.7–109.1).

Two of the surviving titles of Laberius' mimes (*Scylax* and *Catularius*) suggest that dogs were somehow involved in the plot of the farcical pieces, although it is impossible to tell exactly how.[110] Real animals were sometimes used in Greek theatre; however, on occasion practical difficulties or the need to make the scene more hilarious led to the introduction of dummy-animals.[111] There were actors dressed as

[108] There is no reason to change the reading *semissem* into *semesum* 'half-eaten' (Burmann), as Smith and Müller have done. There is no comic point in a half-eaten piece of bread as a means to feed a dog; on the other hand, the bigger the quantity of food, the funnier it will be when Croesus tries to feed an already well-fed and excessively fat dog.

[109] The ribbon is leek-green (*prasina involvebat fascia*, 64.6) in order to make a vulgar contrast with the black colour of the dog (*catellam nigram*, 64.6; but her name suggests white colour) and the yellowish colour of Croesus' dirty teeth (*sordidissimis dentibus*, 64.6). The colours work on the level of visual impact on the audience's eyes, stressing the dramatic description of the events.

[110] See Bonaria 1965, 109, 120; Sandy 1974, 343, n. 32.

[111] For the use of real animals on stage see Arnott, "Animals in the Greek theatre", *Greece and Rome* 28 (1959), 177–9. For dummy-animals see Arist., *Wasps* 179–81, 903 ff., *Birds* 20–4; D.M. MacDowell, *Aristophanes. Wasps* (Oxford: 1971) 155, 251.

animals, as in the trial-scene of the dogs in Arist., *Wasps*, or actual dogs well-trained for the occasion, like Trimalchio's *canes Laconici* (40.2), or the famous dog that enacted brilliantly a part in a mime some time between 75 and 79 A.D. (Plut., *De Sollert. Anim.* 973E–974A).[112] It seems probable that Petronius, as far as the incident of Scylax and Margarita is concerned, worked on a combination of two elements from the mimes: the use of trained dogs and the mimic fracas. Although it is an unforeseen spectacle, Trimalchio manages to take advantage of it and to use it as a means to boast of his wealth (64.11).

The game that follows is the last in the series of games that started at 27.2–3, and should be seen as a consequence of the dog-fight spectacle. As it is described in the text, it may be a complete game or a combination of different games, or it may include only some of the gestures of the original.[113] Nevertheless, it demonstrates Trimalchio's ridiculous behaviour, inappropriate to his age and rank (cf. 27.1 ff.), creating a risible spectacle for the guests and the audience of the novel. This scene is significant for Trimalchio's theatrical personality in that he has recourse to a game, and not to anything else, in order to show that he was not annoyed at the financial loss caused by the dog-fight (64.11).

IX. *Matteae: Sat. 65.1–67.13*

The gross appearance of the savouries pressed upon the guests by Trimalchio no longer evokes surprise or amazement, but rather terror (65.1). In the next course the thin fieldfares are replaced by fat chickens, one for each guest, and capped goose-eggs (65.2). Theatrical wonders have become by now a tedious experience; the element of surprise is reinforced by the introduction of new characters on Trimalchio's stage. Their entrance is noisily signalled by the knock of an official attendant on the door, thus drawing everyone's attention in that direction, and by the shouting of a large group of people

[112] See O. Keller, *Die Antike Tierwelt* (Leipsig: 1909) 134; G. Jennison, *Animals for Show and Pleasure in Ancient Rome* (Manchester Univ. Press: 1937) 72; J.M.C. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art* (Thames and Hudson: 1973) 102 ff., 107, 108; Xen., *Oecon.* 13.8 seems to imply similar skilful performances by trained dogs.

[113] See Marmorale 1947, ad loc.; Smith 1975, ad loc.; Väterlein 1976, 60–1; cf. Horsfall 1989, 84. Perhaps we deal here with a combination of games—a horse-game (cf. 24.4), the game of *micare digitis*, and the game of *bucca-bucca*—invented by Trimalchio and Croesus at that moment.

(65.3), whose inebriation is implicitly suggested by the drunkenness of their leader (65.7).[114] This loud spectacle is dramatically effective, since it not only constitutes an impressive farcical incident in the theatrical tradition of the *trompe-l'œil*, but also gives opportunities for slapstick elements to be developed, such as Encolpius' false alarm, when he thinks that the law is after him (65.4).[115] Agamemnon, who is familiar with people and events in Trimalchio's social circle, explains to the bemused Encolpius the identity of the new-comer, Habinnas, underlining those aspects of his *persona* (65.5) which will be exploited by Trimalchio later on in the narration of the spectacular ἔκφρασις of his funerary statue (71.5–12).

Fortunata at last makes her appearance on the stage of the dining-room after the slaves have shouted her name four times or more (67.3). Her presence at the feast has been already mentioned (37.1; 52.10–11), but the author prefers to make a formal introduction of her only now, because this is the time when she is to join the others at the table. Her arrival is unforgettable. What immediately strikes the narrator is her dazzling combination of colours. The greenish-yellow girdle, hitched probably higher than the level of her waist, is a laughable match with the cherry-red undergarment (67.4). No part of Fortunata's body is uncovered; there is always something which is meant to show off her wealth, display the quality of her taste and, at the same time, point out the comic details of her *persona* as a grotesque 'nouveau-riche' housewife.[116] Good taste for Fortunata is extremely bright colours in strikingly impressive combinations and a huge quantity of jewellery. Nevertheless, the intentions of the author are not confined to a description of tastelessness; vulgarity is presented in such an excessive degree that the whole picture becomes

[114] Against the theory that Habinnas' entrance parodies Alcibiades' entrance see Gagliardi 1980, 82; cf. Boyce 1991, 87–8 (with earlier bibliography on p. 88, n. 37).

[115] Encolpius thinks that Habinnas was a *praetor* (65.4); Agamemnon informs him that he is not and yet Habinnas sits in the *praetorio loco* (65.7)!

[116] See Smith 1975, 187–8. The comic point of Fortunata's anklets (67.4) is not only the material they were made of, but also their shape. One wonders how they could fit on to her fat legs. Likewise, she wears shoes generally worn by men, and has embroidered them with gold probably in order to make them look more luxurious, extravagant and expensive. She is the kind of woman who cares more for extravagant appearance than for quality and elegance. Finally, the superlative *crassissimis* demonstrates not only the comic picture of Fortunata's arms squeezed into the armlets (notice, as well, the compound *detraho*, 67.6), but also her general corpulence. This does not worry her, because Fortunata seems to prefer not what suits her body but, without discrimination, what would decorate every inch of it.

an amusing sight rather than a revolting example of bad taste. From a similar point of view Plautus pokes fun at the length of time women take to adorn themselves (*Poen.* 210–32), and effectively ridicules female extravagance in clothing (variety of names for the garments and multicoloured attire) (*Epid.* 229–35). When, in *Truculentus*, Phronesium's maid, Astaphium, appears on stage, she wears a short dress dyed dirty grey, silver bracelets (270–2), silver rings (274), and earrings (275); she has daintily arranged her curly hair, and put perfume on (287–8), she has applied rouge or red ochre to her cheeks, and chalk all over her body (290).[117]

Scintilla is the only woman who, apart from Fortunata, is described in some detail (67.9). Her vulgarity is again used comically by the author who does not limit himself to ironical comments of low taste. As was the case in the detailed description of Trimalchio's and Fortunata's appearances, bad taste is presented through comic spectacle, and opportunities to create a vivid narrative equivalent of a boorish appearance on stage are certainly not missed.[118] Her husband displays the same vulgarity in his miserly anti-feminism (67.10)[119] and his crude manners towards his host's wife (67.12–13). All these elements, however, are presented within the context of a staged dinner full of dramatic surprises and should be conceived as occasions for visual farcical humour through social criticism.

X. *Secundae mensae: Sat. 68.1–69.5*

An interval is necessary for the change of props in the dining-room, when Trimalchio thought that it was time for the dessert (*secundas mensas*, 68.1) to be served. His demand is absurdly (or rightly?) taken literally by the servants who pick up the existing tables and bring in

[117] On the various coloured garments that were worn by characters in New Comedy see Wiles 1991, 188–92.

[118] The elements that demonstrate Scintilla's boorishness are the *aureola capsella* and the *duo crotalia* she wears (67.9). Scintilla's small box is unique in many aspects: it is made of gold, it is hanging from her neck and it has a name (*Felicio*, 'Good Luck'), the same name as one of Trimalchio's three *Lares* (60.8). Scintilla keeps a pair of earrings, which rattle like castanets (67.9), inside a box hanging from her neck instead of wearing them.

[119] Cf. the similar comic complaints of Periplectomenus, who does not want to get married because of the great expense his wife is going to put him into (Pl., *Mil. Glor.* 685–700).

a new set of furniture (68.1). This incident is clearly the narrative equivalent of a usual Plautine or mimic joke where one character conceives literally what another has said metaphorically. The element of slapstick farce is derived from this misunderstanding, and the situation becomes more comical when the second character gets angry with the action of the first. Trimalchio's excessively wealthy pretension allows him simultaneously to make what he considers to be a witty pun and to show off.

In order that the setting may change completely for the introduction of a new course, Encolpius mentions that the slaves sprinkled the floor with sawdust coloured with saffron and vermilion (68.1); in addition they use powdered mica, a spectacular innovation, at least in Encolpius' eyes (68.1). By this point in the narrative both the audience of the *Cena* and the audience of the novel have realised the essential part that colour-images play in Trimalchio's theatrical world. The host has not, however, chosen these particular coloured substances without a reason. We know that ordinary sawdust was used in the amphitheatre for cleaning (Hor., *S.* 2.4.81; Juv., *S.* 14.66), but the bright colours of the arrogant host's exotic combination 'were the prerogatives of the majesty of princes, to whom Trimalchio, of course, would equate himself.'[120] Similarly Nero had the streets of Rome scattered with saffron when he returned from Greece (Suet., *Nero* 25). Thus until the end of the dinner the ordinary floor of the *triclinium* will remain transformed by the aid of the conventional apparatus of the amphitheatre into the race-track of the *Circus Maximus*.

The brief musical incident of the slave from the luxurious Alexandria, who imitated the voice of a nightingale while he was offering hot water to the guests, is staged by Trimalchio as an accompaniment to the *secundas mensas* of 68.1–2. Again, the connection between food and musical entertainment (or rather the ancillary nature of musical entertainment to the serving of food) is apparent. The imitation of this bird is only one among many vocal imitations in the *Cena* (cf. 64.5; 69.4; 69.5).[121] The song of Trimalchio's well-trained

[120] H.H. Davis, "Colored sawdust", *Classical Journal* 52 (1957), 361. On the use of saffron in the Circus see Rosati 1983, 219, n. 16.

[121] Phaedrus (5.5) mentions a comic competition between a buffoon and a farmer as to which will imitate a pig better. Seneca (*Ep.* 76.9) compares the voices of humans to those of animals and regards the song of nightingales as *dulciorem mobilioremque.* Pliny (*NH* 10.59.120) alludes incredibly to 'nightingales that were apt to learn Greek

slave must have been not only melodious, but also extremely varied in tone, if we are to believe Pliny (*NH* 10.43.81–2) who describes the song of nightingales which lasted for fifteen days and nights continuously with elaborated changes every now and then. If the slave performed even half of these changes in tone, the obscure meaning of Trimalchio's order (*muta*, 68.3) becomes clearer: while the slave was imitating nightingales, Trimalchio was repeatedly using a technical musical term (*muto*) in order to give instructions to a trained member of his vigilant household (cf. 31.5–6) as to when he should change into a different melody of the nightingale's song.[122] This incident is a good example of how a trivial and insignificant job, like the serving of water, can become through Trimalchio's theatrical directions an impressive and funny show.

The ensuing recitation of what at first sight sounds like Vergil, but is actually a mixture of Vergilian grandiose epic hexameters with low farcical Atellan verses, is described in advance as *ludus* (68.4), a performance intended to amuse, a show.[123] This noun characterizes not only the banquet itself as a series of entertaining pieces structured in the manner of theatrical spectacles, but Encolpius himself as a person who perceives and interprets everything in the language of the theatre (cf. 36.6; 31.7; 34.4; 95.1). The indefinite pronoun *alius* (68.4) functions on two levels: in the particular context it seems to imply that the previous imitation of the different tones of the nightingale's voice was a *ludus*; in a general sense, it conveys the idea that we have to deal with a series of spectacles in the dinner-party. The

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and Latin, and, moreover, practised regularly, and spoke new phrases each day, in a still longer continuous series.' Plautus (*Bacch.* 38) offers an amusing joke with a proverbial tone concerning the pleasant singing of the pretty little nightingale. See, also, *Th.L.L.*, s.v. *luscinia*, 2; Horsfall 1989, 84 and 88, n. 88.

[122] This could be the answer to the question put forward by Smith 1975, ad loc., who notes that 'it looks as if *muta* is possibly a topical catch-phrase or conceals some obscure joke.' Other, less plausible, explanations are that Trimalchio, who sings terribly, cannot bear the sound of the melodious nightingale's voice or that the slave imitates the nightingale's voice in a hideous manner. M. Hendry, "The imitation of nightingales: a Petronian crux", *Petronian Society Newsletter* 23.1&2 (1993), 9 argues unconvincingly that in this passage Trimalchio puns on the imperative *muta* (final a long) and the vocative *muta* (final a short). The iterative nature of Trimalchio's theatrical instruction to his slave is shown in the text by the adverb *subinde* (68.3) = *saepius*, 'repeatedly'. See *OLD*, s.v., 2a and cf. Pellegrino 1975, 245. For *muto* in the sense of 'to alter in relation to the modulation of voice and musical tones' cf. Cic., *Orat.* 18.59; Aul. Gell., *NA* 13.21.10, 18.12.8.

[123] Cf. Cic., *Fam.* 7.1.3; Verg., *Georg.* 2.381; Livy, 7.2.12; Juv., 11.179. Horsfall 1989, 87, n. 45–6 provides a lengthy list of evidence for public readings or performances of Vergil.

adverb *ecce* (68.4) focuses everyone's attention on the pseudo-Vergilian recitation and is not, at least as far as we can tell from the text, directly connected with the nightingale-spectacle. We have seen that many of the events that take place in the *Cena* are interconnected in order to create one spectacle with lots of different stages. Nevertheless, here the use of the adverb *ecce* suggests that the spectacles as a whole follow no particular order nor fit any specific pattern, but are described as they are seen by Encolpius' satiric eye, which shifts incoherently from one place to another, captured by a different impressive picture each time.

The main features of this *ludus* which transform it, along with the rest of the spectacles in the *Cena*, into a distasteful torture for the guests' eyes and ears are: the sing-song tone of the slave's voice (68.4: *proclamavit*... *canora voce*; cf. Quint. 1.8.1), the startling manner in which it begins (68.4: *subito*), the unharmonious and hideous style in which it is performed (68.5; cf. 31.6), its duration (68.6), the barbarous nature of the manner of delivery (68.5: *barbariae*; cf. *OLD*, s.v., 2.b.a), and the interspersing of Atellan verses in the Vergilian text. The inclusion of these verses in epic poetry totally inappropriate to the low theatrical genre harmonizes with Trimalchio's vulgar fondness for the popular farcical theatre (cf. 53.13), but, nevertheless, shows no understanding, respect or appreciation for Vergil's masterpiece. The result of all these factors was that in both aspects of content and delivery, the performance was insufferable. The words *ut tunc primum me etiam Vergilius offenderit* 'so that even Vergil got on my nerves for the first time in my life' (68.5) show Encolpius' disapproval of the way in which the spectacle was performed. Everything that is connected with the stage clearly reflects Trimalchio's vulgar tastes.

The ensuing conversation between Habinnas, Scintilla, and Trimalchio about the mental and physical graces of the slave Massa reveals Habinnas' peculiar interest in his slave (he has had him educated by the street-entertainers: 68.6: *circulatores*), Scintilla's jealous character (69.2: *zelotypa*),[124] and Trimalchio's vulgar frankness in uncovering the hypocrisy that women, like Scintilla, exhibit as far as their relationships with slaves are concerned (69.3). This brief discus-

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[124] Fortunata acts in a similarly jealous manner at 74.9. Could it be that, by making Trimalchio use the word *zelotypa*, Petronius pointed at the particular mimic type of the Jealous Woman and thus indirectly induced the audience of the novel to perceive Scintilla in such a manner? Cf. Fantham 1986, 54.

sion could have been the 'script' of a short mimic piece in which the stock-character of the Jealous Woman would accuse one of her slaves of being a pimp (69.1: *agaga*) and threaten him with branding, because he was the object of her husband's affection.[125] The comic point in the dialogue is that they argue about someone who is squint-eyed and snores (68.8)! Massa and his histrionic abilities occupy the centre of attention for at least the next half hour (69.4). At first, he imitates trumpeters with a clay lamp and to the accompaniment of Habinnas who produces a whistling sound by pulling down his lower lip (69.4).

It is not without reason that the impersonation of trumpeters is chosen as a spectacle. The *tibicines* were normally called to enliven feasts (Quint., 1.10.20), but in dramatic performances they accompanied the singers (Hor., *A.P.* 202–4) and entertained the audience during possible intervals between the acts (Pl., *Pseud.* 576). In a similar way Massa's impersonation functions as an entr' acte before another spectacle, the staged course in which everything was made out of pork (69.6–70.1), begins. The phrase *ultimo etiam* (69.5) implies a gradual succession of events (cf. 67.6), thus connecting the trumpeters' impersonation with the pipe-players' imitation (69.5). The element of illusion and deception has been expanded from the presentation of food into the dramatic entertainment: the real instrument is not used but something which looks like it; in the case of the trumpeters there was a *lucerna fictilis* (69.4), now there are *harundines quassae* (69.5).

It seems, however, that this second imitation is somehow connected with the obscure imitation of the *mulionum fata* (*modo . . . choraulas imitatus est, modo . . . mulionum fata egit*: 69.5), on which Smith provides a lengthy but misleading discussion. Certainly, the text itself is general and the surviving mimic fragments not at all helpful in defining precisely what it was that Massa performed. But there are good reasons to believe that this piece must have been related in some way to a subject of a mimic or pantomimic plot. A technical term of the theatre is used for Massa's performance (*egit* 'to act' 69.5; cf. Pl., *Amph.* 88; Varro, *LL* 6.77; Suet., *Jul.* 39.2; Juv., 8.186); the subject-matter, the *mulionum fata*, must have been obscene enough for a mime (cf. 126.6; Sen.,

[125] The type of the *zelotypus* (husband / wife) is strongly connected with the farcical stage: see ch. one, nn. 38 and 39. Compare, also, Scintilla's threat *at curabo, stigmam habeat* (69.1) with the similar orders that the jealous Bitinna gives in Herodas' Fifth Mime (ΖΗΛΟΤΥΠΟΣ 65–7), and the cruel punishment proposed by the κυρία for Ἀπολλωνία and Αἴσωπος in one of the Oxyrhynchus-mimes (1–10 Page).

Ep. 47.15) and has actually been included in the list of theatrical entertainments (cf. 68.7: *itaque parem non habet, sive muliones volet sive circulatores imitari*);[126] the *lacerna* and the *flagellum* (perhaps the *caligae*, as well) (69.5) must be considered as the actor's equipment,[127] in the same way that ivy, vineleaves, a small basket, and grapes (41.6) were part of the costume in the earlier pantomime on Dionysus (41.6–8). Consequently, we must assume that here we are dealing with a pantomime in which both parts are enacted alternately by Massa: he is, at the same time, the silent dancer who describes the action and the *choraules* who accompanies the gestures of the dancer.

XI. *Epidipnis: Sat. 69.6–78.8*

The last course of a long series of 'theatrically' staged and served dishes is the climax of the gastronomic travesties invented by Trimalchio's amazing imagination: pastry with raisins and nuts in the shape of fieldfares (69.6), quinces covered with thorns in the form of sea-urchins (69.7), ham in the shape of a fat goose with all sorts of fish and birds around it (69.8; 70.1). Trimalchio manages to outwit the guesses of his guests, including Encolpius, concerning the ingredients of the last dish (69.8–9), but this game is no longer amusing to Encolpius, who considers even starvation a better alternative to eating the stuff (69.7). Transformation of food is, of course, only one part in the whole game of deception which takes place in Trimalchio's illusive world.[128] This travesty, however, is not a sign of moral degradation, springing up from the pretentious luxury of a corrupt Roman, or a challenging test of cleverness, but, rather, an amusing surprise whose comic character is derived both from the actual metamorphosis of the food itself and from the self-irony which the narrator uses to comment on his ingeniousness (69.9). After the

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[126] For imitators in general see Horsfall 1989, 89, n. 90. On *fatum* in the sense of *vita* cf. Sen., *Ep.* 57.1; Ov., *Tr.* 5.5.62; Livy, 8.24.2. See *Th.L.L.*, s.v., B.1. Therefore, there is no reason to emend the text.

[127] On the *lacerna* as an actual muleteer's cloak see Cic., *Sest.* 82. Cf., also, Eumolpus' definition of the necessary props for a mime: *utinam quidem sufficeret largior scaena, id est vestis humanior, instrumentum lautius quod praeberet mendacio fidem* (117.2).

[128] On the general tendency of extravagant Roman hosts to serve food at banquets disguised in such a manner that it looked completely different from what it really was (cf. Apicius, 4.2.11: *nemo agnoscet quid manducet*) see Rosati 1983, 220. Trimalchio, however, takes the custom to its most vulgar extremes.

shocking revelation of the original material of the last dish (70.1), Trimalchio proceeds to praise the man responsible for the culinary disguises during the meal (70.2; 70.3): his real name is not stated, but in harmony with his tremendous cooking abilities, Trimalchio has named him Daedalus (70.2), a perfect choice, since the legendary architect of the Cretan labyrinth personifies not only the deceptive and perplexed reality of Trimalchio's culinary world but also the labyrinthine structure of the whole dinner, and, indeed, of Trimalchio's house.

The brief incident of a quarrel, staged in advance, between two slaves shows how Trimalchio uses slapstick elements in order to present his guests with another dish of exotic food. Without a moment's break (70.4: *subito*) from the self-indulgent exhibition of the present that Trimalchio has bought for his cook (70.3), two slaves enter carrying water-pots on their necks (70.4), and display to Encolpius by their appearance that not only they had been at a water-tank, but also that they had been involved in a fight there (probably, they were wet). The manner in which the episode is developed, may depend on an actual farcical incident taken from the mimes.[129] Trimalchio organizes an impromptu mimic court in which he decides who is right and who is wrong (70.5). Strangely enough, Encolpius gives details of neither the actual reason for the fight nor Trimalchio's final judgement. This hints at both the rapid development of events and the role-playing of those involved in them. The unexpected turn that things take, namely that both slaves scornfully ignore their master's wishes and start fighting in front of everybody (70.5), amazes and confuses all the guests. Everything happens so fast that the only thing one can do is to sit and watch in shock (70.6). The situation, however, becomes clearer when the two slaves hit with their sticks and break each other's *amphorae*. A variety of sea-delicacies poured from the broken pots (70.6), which were supposed to contain only water. Trimalchio's real aim in organizing all this pretence was to serve scallops and oysters! A slave picks them up and brings them round on a dish (70.6), but this is not the end of the episode: in order to give the final touch to these *lautitiae* (70.7), snails served on a silver

[129] Pellegrino 1975, 348 points out the similarity between this scene and Livy, 1.40.5 (the assassination of Tarquin by two shepherds). Nevertheless, J. Révay, "Zwei Liviusreminiszenzen bei Petron", *Philologische Wochenschrift* 17 (1923), 408 rightly thinks that, despite some similarities, which after all are limited to a certain degree, 'Petron in diesem Falle das Livianische Vorbild in mimischen Sinne umgearbeitet zu haben.'

grill are brought in by the ingenious cook. Trimalchio creates a whole sub-plot to serve a course, using farcical elements (a mimic fracas, a pseudo-court scene), popular in Plautine slapstick comedies and in the mimes. As usual, harshness of sound and lack of taste accompany Trimalchio's stage-directions of these comic events: Trimalchio's cook, as he hands round the snails, performs a song with a *tremula taeterrimaque voce* (70.7; cf. 35.6).

The organization of the dinner's theatricality now seems to be out of Trimalchio's control, for he creates more anarchy by inviting his slaves to join them (70.10),[130] thus making Encolpius suffer from the terrible smell of the cook who sits next to him (70.12). The cook's imitation of Ephesus (70.13), a tragic actor, unknown to us, must have been as outrageous to listen to as the imitations of Trimalchio and the other staff, but it clearly suggests that the vulgar host's theatrical preoccupations have passed through to his household.[131]

The morbid spectacle of Trimalchio's staged death has its dress rehearsal at this point with the moaning and mourning of the household accompanying the reading of his testament (71.4; cf. 72.1). The description of the statue that Trimalchio asks for from Habinnas after his death (71.5–12), recapitulates Trimalchio's life, as he wants to represent it, and functions in a similar manner to the ἔκφρασις on the exterior of his house which introduced his character to those who visited him (29.3–6). The ἔκφρασις of Trimalchio's funerary statue, symmetrically placed near the end of the *Cena*, as the wall-painting had been described shortly after its beginning, argues for a ring-composition of this part of the novel. Trimalchio himself justifies the pedantic manner in which he deals with the statue (71.7), but the detailed description of the sculpture gives the impression that Trimalchio is embarking on another spectacular entrance, this time into eternity, similar to and, surely, more extravagant than the one he had made earlier on in his dinner (32.1–4). The guests would probably not have been surprised by the plethora of ornamental secondary scenes on the statue, since most of the elements there,

[130] According to Sullivan 1968(a), 132–5 and 1985(b), 1682, Petronius parodies here Seneca's philosophical ideas about the equality of slaves and free men. Seneca himself, however, refers to the respectable treatment of slaves as a feature of the mimes: *Ep. Mor.* 47.14.

[131] At least two of Trimalchio's slaves have names found in Plautine comedies: Stichus (77.7; cf. the slave Stichus in Plautus' comedy) and Cario (71.2; cf. the cook in Plautus' *Miles*).

destined to underline Trimalchio's unique figure, have already occurred in the sequence of the *Cena* in connection with the host: dogs (71.6; 71.11 / 40.2; 64.6–10), garlands (71.6 / 50.1; 60.3; 70.8), perfumes (71.6 / 28.2), gladiatorial scenes (71.6 / 29.9; 52.3), food and drink (71.7 / *passim*), inscriptions (71.7; 71.12 / 28.7; 30.2; 30.3–4), Trimalchio's arrogant illusions (71.9 / 32.2), his passion for rings and money (71.9 / 32.3), Fortunata (71.11 / 37.2 ff.), Croesus (71.11 / 28.4; 64.5), the sundial revealing its owner's morbid preoccupations with time and death (71.11 / 26.9); everything is summarized there.

Trimalchio, however, does not want to create an atmosphere of static events, and, indeed, he manages to give movement to the imaginary sculpture by suggesting the engraving of three scenes: ships in full sail (71.9), dining-rooms with people enjoying themselves (71.10), and a broken amphora and a guilty slave (71.11). It should be noted that Trimalchio entered his *triclinium* not on foot (32.1), and a desire to create an impression of superiority is in his mind when he speaks of *naves . . . plenis velis euntes*, which, perhaps, would have been effectively used for the dramatic entrance into the amphitheatre of a public figure or an actor during the *ludi*. Similarly, the *triclinium*, which has been aptly transformed into a background for staged incidents such as the broken amphora (cf. 70.4–7; 52.4–6; 34.2–3), has its appropriate place in the whole setting of images carefully selected by Trimalchio's theatrical mind. The final inscription is a long and pompous account of Trimalchio's personality and career (71.12), the climactic arrogance of the laconic ending (*"vale: et tu"*, 71.12) being in accordance with Trimalchio's behaviour towards his guests during his dinner (33.1; 34.7). The vulgar host must have narrated several times in the past his personal *post mortem* wishes to Habinnas (71.5), and certainly it is not for the stonemason's sake that Trimalchio embarks on another detailed description. Even his funerary statue should be interpreted as one more visual challenge to his guests' expectations who by this time have got used to perceiving and interpreting the signals they receive through the code of popular theatre.

In the same way that Quartilla's pretended sadness was suddenly transformed into hysterical laughter, thus showing that her previous mood was nothing but crocodile tears (18.7–19.1), Trimalchio's tears, which came as a result of the description of his funerary statue and functioned as a cue for everyone else, even for Encolpius, to start crying (72.1–2), are abruptly changed into a cheerful message to enjoy life and, in particular, the luxury of a hot bath (72.2–3). This change

of theatrical setting inside Trimalchio's huge house has been diligently prepared in advance on his orders to create an atmosphere of mourning and grief, so that a bath, with all the necessary games and songs to give it a theatrical colour, comes as a welcome suggestion. Indeed, Habinnas approves eagerly of the idea (72.4), but Encolpius and Ascyltus have other plans (72.5–6). Trying to avoid an unbearable sequence of Trimalchio's arrogance in his hot (72.3) bath, they quite unexpectedly end up having a cold bath. With Giton leading their way to the exit, the three friends are startled by a huge dog (perhaps Scylax, cf. his description at 64.7), and in a comic manner Ascyltus first and Encolpius second, the latter in his attempt to help the former, fall into the fish-pond (72.7). The Vergilian undertones of the incident are evident both in the quietening of the dog with pieces of food (72.9; cf. *Aen.* 6.417–23) and in the Sibylline statement of the *atriensis* (72.10). However, the attempt of the three friends to escape from Trimalchio's labyrinth is clearly presented as a farcical scene with the conventional, and popular, slapstick elements of amusing accidents and risible hopelessness. Petronius' sophisticated humour is, of course, responsible for the epic references in the farce,[132] but farce itself has employed mythological, and even Vergilian, subjects to produce a performance of entertaining burlesque with intellectual undertones. It may be suggested that the author knew of these performances and wrote this scene as if it were the equivalent of a mimic *exodium* in prose.

The setting changes again into another dining-room (73.5), the place which will constitute the final background for the ensuing events: the sudden change of Trimalchio's mood created by a cock's crow; Trimalchio's row with Fortunata (74.8 ff.), and the staged death of the host (78.5 ff.).

Superstition is the starting point for the drawing of a comic picture: Trimalchio conceives the cock, which crowed, not as a bird but as a trumpeter (*bucinus*, 74.2) whose signal may mean fire or death (74.2); thus he shows that music, and, consequently, public spectacles, were firmly fixed in his mind as the code through which he interpreted events of his life. A vaguely defined reward is established (74.3) and everyone chases the innocent cock whose only fault was that he

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132 See R.M. Newton, "Trimalchio's hellish bath", *Classical Journal* 77 (1982), 318; E. Courtney, "Petronius and the Underworld", *American Journal of Philology* 108 (1987), 409.

had crowed, probably because dawn was coming. The bird is caught even before Trimalchio has time to give his orders (74.4); capital punishment, where everyone participated in some way or other (74.5), thus indulging Trimalchio's wish, is performed by Trimalchio's expert household at an incredibly fast speed. What the superstitious host and his guests do not know is that a fire, though an illusory one (78.7), will eventually bring the meal to an end, but, apart from this mimic ridicule of superstitions, Petronius does not miss the opportunity to compose a hilarious scene where the elements of extravagance (74.1) and unbelievable speed (74.4) make it almost farcical.

The result of Fortunata's jealousy of Trimalchio's affection towards a slave (74.8) is to ruin the peaceful happiness of the guests (74.8), and to create a melodramatic scene of marital fighting (74.9–75.9), during which insults of a Plautine kind (74.9; 74.13; 74.14; 75.6; 75.9) and actual violence (74.10) take place in a most amusing and unexpected way:[133] Trimalchio throws a cup at his wife's face. Note the dramatic and exaggerated manner in which everything is performed: Fortunata's hands tremble, she shouts, covers her face, quivers all over her body, cries and groans, while a cold wine-jar is pressed against her cheek in order not to let the blow leave a bruise on her face (74.11–12). Fortunata is over-acting and reflects Trimalchio's reactions when he was injured by an acrobat (54.1–2). It is interesting, however, to discover from her husband's tirade against her that Fortunata was an *ambubaia*, a flute-girl (74.13), an occupation which indirectly points to her low morals, but equally shows that in her past she was connected with the stage. The following exposition of Trimalchio's life (75.8–77.6) should not be interpreted as an edifying *curriculum vitae* of a *homo novus*. It functions as the supplementary piece of information which would complete the picture Trimalchio has given to his guests about himself already from the painting outside his house (29.3–6) and the detailed ἔκφρασις of his funerary statue (71.5–12).

It is now that in a rather casual manner the idea of death is introduced quite vividly into the dining-room. The atmosphere becomes really morbid when Trimalchio orders his slave Stichus to bring his

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[133] For parallels in Plautus see the quarrel between Artemona and Demaenetus, because the latter was caught in the act by the former kissing Philaenium (*Asin.* 878–937). Likewise in Pl., *Men.* 110–22, Menaechmus I delivers a long tirade against his wife (*Matrona*), who inquires every movement he makes, although he provides her with all the goods she wants.

grave-clothes and funeral ointment (77.7). Without foregoing his arrogant exhibitionism (78.1), and adopting now a cruel (78.2) and then a sentimental (78.3–4) attitude, Trimalchio asks for a new spectacle to take place, his death.[134] One cannot be sure whether this is prescheduled or not, but the fact remains that this scene has all the essential theatrical characteristics which we have found throughout the staging of other spectacles during the *Cena*. Trimalchio is acting the comic role of a dead person with the appropriate musical accompaniment. He is the stage-director of his own death. As soon as he has taken the right position on stage (78.5: *cervicalibus multis extendit se supra torum extremum*), he gives the general plot of what is going to follow (78.5: *'fingite me . . . mortuum esse'*), and asks for the participation of the musicians (78.5: *dicite aliquid belli*) and, undoubtedly, of his audience, guests and household. Once more, and for the last time, the motif of music is used by Trimalchio in order to fulfil his own purposes, to underline the mournful tone of the scene. Nevertheless, Encolpius' description of the sound the *cornicines* produced (78.6) shows that the noise must have been terrible and that this mock-funeral was a loud, discordant farce rather than a successful imitation of a solemn funerary procession. This noise created the impression that Trimalchio's house was on fire, and the night-watchmen put an unexpected end to his feast by a violent incursion into the house, thus creating more noise and confusion (78.7).

The sudden end of the *Cena*, with the hasty departure of the heroes (78.8), a favourite Petronian motif, resembles strongly the abrupt endings of the mime-performances (Cic., *Cael.* 65), but even the false fire might be regarded as a subject which was presented on stage in, perhaps, the performance of Afranius' *Incendium*, although the ten surviving fragments are not helpful in indicating how.[135] Apart from the historical parallels of mock-funerals which may have influenced Petronius in the description of this scene,[136] it must be pointed out that the motif of false death also occurs in fiction and on the Roman mimic stage. Although certain details in Tacitus' (*Hist.* 4.45) and Seneca's (*Brev. Vit.* 20.4; *Ep.* 12.8) accounts of such morbid scenes are strikingly similar to some details in Trimalchio's death, it is plausible

[134] *novum acroama* (78.5). On this technical theatrical term see *Sat.* 53.12; cf. Smith 1975, ad loc.; Horsfall 1989, 79.

[135] See Daviault 1981, 190–1, n. 1. Suetonius (*Nero* 11.2) speaks of a real fire when this play was performed in Nero's age.

[136] See Horsfall 1989, 198 and 207, n. 29.

that Trimalchio, who has conceived every part of his dinner as a theatrical entertainment, should have staged his death according to the rules of the farcical drama of which he is so fond. One must not assume, therefore, that this scene is intended to be taken seriously in order to underline the psychological decline that luxury brings in one's life.[137] Without doubt, Trimalchio will provide the same entertainment over and over again.

The predominant influence of satire on the composition of this part of the novel can be seen in the satirical features of vulgarity, arrogance, pretension to learning, and superstition which accompany Trimalchio's activities before and throughout his dinner-party.[138] Petronius, however, has intensified his satirical aim by making an effective match between satire and theatre through the presentation of these satirical traits in a spectacular manner. Thus, the element of theatricality in the *Cena Trimalchionis*, different in scope from its dimension in the rest of the surviving novel, can be demonstrated in the spectacular appearance of the host, his wife, and their household, in the unusual and eccentric use of games, music, furnishing, and food, and finally in the employment of farcical spectacles from the popular mimes for the audience's entertainment during the meal.

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[137] See Zeitlin 1971, 662; Arrowsmith 1972, 306 ff.

[138] See Walsh 1970, 114–33.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNFAITHFUL LOVERS AND MANIC POETASTERS

I. *Encolpius et Ascyltus rixantur de Gitone: Sat. 79.1–82.6*

It is made obvious for both the ancient Roman auditor and the contemporary reader of our age that, whenever the main, or secondary, figures of this novel seek either to act in some way, or simply to make a statement which expresses their feelings, they adopt a *persona*, usually taken from a literary area. In the surviving text Encolpius begins by assuming the role of a learned *scholasticus*, and, for personal reasons, argues against Agamemnon's educational humbug (1–6); again Encolpius plays the lost Aeneas in the brothel (6.4–7.1), while the lascivious couple, Ascyltus and Giton, imitate Tarquinius and Lucretia, in order to justify their sexual desires within a ridiculously sophisticated context. However, one of the most remarkable examples of this theatrical role-playing, in which one can note the rapid alternation of literary *personae*, is the section of the *Satyrica* which covers the events immediately after the feast of Trimalchio and before Encolpius' visit to the art-gallery.

Although the outrageous trio managed to escape somehow from Trimalchio's labyrinthine house, it seems that there are still difficulties awaiting them. Their problems now are the silence of the midnight-hour (79.1), their drunkenness and their ignorance of these quarters (79.2). The situation presented is comically pathetic since Encolpius and his *fratres* are described dramatically as three drunkards who drag their bleeding feet for almost a whole hour over the flints and the pieces of broken pots (79.3), before Giton's cleverness puts an end to their sufferings. The latter had already marked with chalk all the posts and the columns, playing the part of an Ariadne in a first century A.D. Roman low-life milieu. They find their way to the lodgings but there is nothing in their appearance to remind us of heroic figures: an exhausted and perspiring (79.5) Theseus is clearly a laughable parody of the legendary hero.

Petronius' treatment of the Theseus-saga is more than an ironic version of the hackneyed theme that makes Juvenal (1.2–3) suffer.

Bearing in mind that the theatre of the mime often takes its themes from drama proper and performs them in such a way that they become ridiculous,[1] one is inclined to think that the author has employed the same technique in this passage too. Faithful to the mimic spirit, Petronius presents the story of Ariadne and Theseus in a subversive way. The hint of the well-known legend through Giton's clever action does not exactly foreshadow or guarantee that what is going to happen in the novel will follow the legend. In fact, Giton, who plays the *prudens* Ariadne, not only is not going to be deserted by Encolpius, a new Theseus, but, according to this mythological travesty, *he* is going to be the one who will abandon Theseus for a Dionysus in the shape of Ascyltus! Petronius' preoccupation with the mime is not attested only here and his text provides many parallels to support such a derisive use of material from mythology, epic or drama (cf. 98.5, 105.9–10).

The setting changes now from an exterior space, the dark streets outside the inn, to an interior one, the room inside the inn. We must imagine that there are two beds on stage. Encolpius and Giton are making love on one of them, while Ascyltus is waiting slily to take his share in lust. The sexual comedy has just begun, for, during the night and while Encolpius was languid because of the wine he had drunk (79.9), just as Troy was 'buried in sleep and wine' (*Aen.* 2.265) before the invasion of the Greeks, another kind of 'invasion' takes place: Giton, either by force or willingly (79.9), moves to Ascyltus' bed. At the sight of the two lovers Encolpius combines vengeance with tragic style: *ego dubitavi an utrumque traicerem gladio somnumque morti iungerem* 'I hesitated whether I ought to pierce both of them with a sword and join their sleep with death' (79.10).[2] He wakes Giton up with blows, his face assumes a fierce look (79.11) and in his brief speech to Ascyltus he employs expressions which attribute to his colleague an incorrigible loss of human morality (79.9; 79.11). The infidelity of the wife, Giton, with the lover, Ascyltus, the unexpected arrival of the husband, Encolpius, his indecision whether to kill them or save them, his final resolution to trust things to the power of 'fidelity' and appoint the wife as the *iudex litis* (80.6), evoke the scene

[1] See Beare 1964, 150; Rieks 1978, 370.

[2] Cf. the reaction of the cuckold husband in the adultery-mimes: Chor., *Apol. Mimorum* 55: ἄνθρωπε, οὐδὲ τὸν ἐπὶ σκηνῆς τὴν δοκοῦσαν μοιχεύοντά μου γυναῖκα περιορῶ, ἀγανακτῶ δὲ καὶ δεινά φημι πεπονθέναι καὶ κάλει παῖδα καὶ μάχαιράν τις φερέτω.

of an adultery-mime, whose structure, though not its outcome,[3] resembles strongly the Petronian episode. Moreover, the employment of the same motif in a later incident of the novel (namely, the passages 97–99) demonstrates that it was a suitable narrative device for Petronius' theatrical intentions when he dealt with the intrigues, jealousies, and comic patterns of relationships between the homosexual trios (Encolpius-Giton-Ascyltus and Encolpius-Giton-Eumolpus). The outcome of the episode is rather unexpected, since Giton, who plays the wife, when asked to choose between his 'husband' and his 'lover', prefers to follow the latter in a bold and most amusing manner: *qui ne deliberavit quidem, ut videretur cunctatus, verum statim ab extrema parte verbi consurrexit* <*et*> *fratrem Ascylton elegit* 'He did not even consider looking hesitant, but immediately after I finished speaking he got up and chose Ascyltus for his lover and companion' (80.6).

Before this shameless competition takes place, Ascyltus' suggestion that they divide Giton in two (79.12), as they had divided everything else they shared in the past, allows the audience of the novel to watch a masterpiece of Petronian staging. Ascyltus is no more than a parricide (*parricidali manu*, 80.1) who demands a fair distribution of his share. Encolpius imitates his gestures and takes an impressive posture for fighting: *intorto circa bracchium pallio composui ad proeliandum gradum* 'I wound the cloak round my arm and prepared my footing for a fight.' (80.2). Giton rushes between them and with tears and supplications (80.3) begs them not to play Eteocles and Polyneikes,[4] offering himself as a sacrifice to expiate the wrathful spirits of his *fratres*. Without doubt, Giton is giving one of the most successful performances of his life.[5]

It would be easy to adapt this scene (79.11–80.6) for the stage.

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[3] See Chor., *Apol. Mimorum* 30, 55.

[4] The same motif is used in the reconciliation of the two brothers, the pastry-cook and the chef, in Apul., *Met.* 10.14. Cf. Rankin 1969(a), 115, n. 2; Sullivan 1968(a), 216; Sandy, "Satire in the *Satyricon*", *American Journal of Philology* 90 (1969), 297; Walsh 1970, 92; Slater 1990(b), 88–9.

[5] Collignon 1892, 120 parallels this passage with *Aen.* 9.426–7 where Nisus offers himself to save Euryalus. The pattern, however, of two individuals or nations fighting for the possession of a third is clearly recognizable, and parallels from legend or literature can easily be drawn: see, e.g., the Sabine women in Livy, 1.13.1–3. Giton represents also the heroine of the Greek romance, who, besides her beloved, has so many admirers that intrigues and attempts to steal her are the common consequences of her beauty. These literary *personae* suggest the vast framework and the hackneyed roles of Giton's acting.

Enc. (to Asc., angrily): *Quoniam fidem scelere violasti et communem amicitiam, res tuas ocius tolle*[6] *et alium locum quem polluas quaere.*

(Encolpius and Ascyltus divide their spoils).

Asc. (to Encolpius): *Age nunc et puerum dividamus.*

(Pause. Encolpius thinks that Ascyltus is joking).

Asc. (drawing his sword murderously): *Non frueris hac praeda, super quam solus incumbis. Partem meam necesse est vel hoc gladio contemptus abscidam.*

(Encolpius also draws his sword, wraps his cloak round his arm, and stands in a fighting-position).

Git. (touching their knees as a supplicant with tears): *Ne Thebanum par humilis taberna spectet neve sanguine mutuo polluatis familiaritatis clarissimae sacra.* (In a louder voice) *Quod si utique facinore opus est, nudo ecce iugulum, convertite huc manus, imprimite mucrones. ego mori debeo, qui amicitiae sacramentum delevi.*

(Encolpius and Ascyltus put up their swords.)

Asc.: *Ego finem discordiae imponam. puer ipse quem vult sequatur, ut sit illi saltem in eligendo fratre [salva] libertas.*

(Encolpius agrees eagerly. Giton without hesitation chooses Ascyltus).

(Giton and Ascyltus exit).

This scene, then, is neither a parody of Vergil, nor a ridiculous Aeschylean tragedy but rather an enjoyable 'insanity of wretched people' (*miserorum dementiam*, 80.3), a hotch-potch constructed in the Petronian spirit of sophisticated farce.

Two short poems in elegiac verse follow (80.9). The first is a cynical generalization on Giton's behaviour towards Encolpius. Life is depicted as a game where profit and personal interests are the principal rules (80.9.1–4). Are these lines to be taken at face-value? Viewing the poem in the context of the opportunistic relationship between Encolpius and his lovers, every hint of possible moral intention fades away. Moreover, the elegiac couplets suggest a pattern of well-calculated and far from spontaneous actions, which function as a reminiscence for the audience to interpret what happens in the novel as a changeable game (*mobile opus*, line 2), and to conceive the characters of the novel as *personae* who change roles according to their interests:

[6] The phrase *res tuas tolle* reminds one of the formulaic expression *res tuas tibi habe* which is used in the language of divorce. In this case, Giton is the child of the marriage!

cum fortuna manet, vultum servatis, amici; / cum cedidit, turpi vertitis ora fuga. 'As long as good luck holds, you keep on having a smiling face, my friends; when it leaves me, you turn your faces away in a shameless flight.'[7] This idea of life as a theatrical game is reinforced by the second short poem (80.9.5–8) which is always mentioned as a major piece of evidence to demonstrate the mime's influence on Petronius.[8]

grex agit in scaena mimum: pater ille vocatur,
filius hic, nomen divitis ille tenet.
mox ubi ridendas inclusit pagina partes,
vera redit facies, assimulata perit.
The troupe performs a mime on stage: one is called the father,
another the son, another holds the title of the millionaire.
Then, when the page shuts up the laughable roles,
the true face reappears, the pretended one is gone.

Life is a stage. People are actors. What they perform is a mime, not even a comedy. The father, the son, the millionaire are some of the roles of the repertoire, and there is always a contrast between the pretended and the real face (line 8).[9] It should be stressed that, even if we visualize the *facies* as a mask of an actor or as a theatrical role, what is underlined in the poem is the image of a smile, which is connected to the motif of laughter, its recurrence among the characteristics of the various *personae* of the novel, and its significant function in the plot of the narrative. By stressing the image of laughter in these elegiacs, Petronius points subtly to the ridicule of the situations his characters are involved in.[10]

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[7] Slater, "An echo of *Ars Poetica* 5 in Petronius", *Philologus* 134 (1990), 159 thinks that the last three words of the third line, *vultum servatis amici*, are an echo of the last three words of the opening sentence of Horace's *Ars Poetica* 5, *risum teneatis amici*. 'Whatever hand placed the four lines of elegiacs treating a mime performance following these lines was impelled by a recognition of the theatricality of friendship in Petronius' world.' (p. 160).

[8] See Collignon 1892, 276; Rosenblüth 1909, 36, n. 2; Walsh 1970, 25; Slater 1990(b), 89 ff.

[9] Possible literary parallels for the idea expressed are: Sen., *Ep.* 76.31; cf. *Ep.* 24.13; Lucr., *DRN* 3.55 ff. The purpose of Petronius' poem, however, is not at all moralising or philosophical, but belongs to the tradition of comments on the notion of pretence, made by comedy at its own expense: in Pl., *Rud.* (1249–53), Gripus says that, when actors, who preach moral lessons in comedies, take their masks off after the performance, they become completely different characters. See Hunter 1985, 140–1.

[10] See Walsh 1970, 27. Slater, "*Satyricon* 80.9: Petronius and manuscript illustrations", *Classical Journal* 82 (1987), 217 interprets the phrase *ridendas . . . partes* (80.9.7)

The facts that in the poem the word *pagina* is mentioned,[11] and that these elegiacs seem to be a comment on the action made by an unidentified voice, induced Slater to assume that the *Satyrica* was written in order to be read and not to be heard from a *recitator*.[12] I fail to understand why the person, who would recite the novel to the small Neronian group, would not be able to read these four lines as a comment on the surrounding action not necessarily made by a character but surely written by the author of the novel.

The next scene (81.1 ff.) finds Encolpius changing roles one after the other in order to express his present situation. Like Achilles, Encolpius, alone and deserted by Giton, retires to the shore and takes care to make his situation much more dramatic than that of his original, the Homeric hero, by exaggerating the savage conditions in which he lives and the pitiless treatment he gives to himself (81.2). The impressively lengthy monologue that follows (81.3–6) is a pastiche of Homeric-Vergilian images.[13] Encolpius becomes an Achilles telling his misfortunes to his mother, Thetis, or an Aeneas in the middle of burning Troy, or a Venus complaining to her father about her son's sufferings, or even a furious Juno convincing herself to take the matter into her own hands. The significance, however, of this monologue lies not only in its literary ingredients as role-playing, but also in the way it works. 'Encolpius talks himself into the role of

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as referring to 'the collections of masks in an *aedicula*, such as we see in the illustrated manuscripts of Terence', and notes that 'Petronius' poem here depicts the living stage performance transformed into the painted figures of book illustration. In much the same way Petronius has transformed features of the mime into elements of his prose narrative.' My objection to this interpretation is that it connects mime and masks, whereas it is unlikely that mime-actors wore masks. For this reason, I believe, the interpretation of the poem as role-playing would suit better the Petronian staging-technique. Moreover, one should not assume that there had been an actual stage-performance of the novel. The poem must be referring to the spirit of literary-theatrical hypocrisy of the novel's characters, not to its actual theatrical delivery to the small circle of Nero's court.

[11] W.S. Watt, "Notes on Petronius", *Classica et Mediaevalia* 37 (1986), 179 thinks that *pagina* should be obelized, because 'Petronius is talking about actors on the stage, not characters in a book'. Following R.G.M. Nisbet, "Review of Müller, K., *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon* (München: 1961)", *Journal of Roman Studies* 52 (1962), 230–2, he suggests *plaudite*, in the sense of 'curtain', and refers to Quint., 6.1.52 and Cic., *De Sen.* 70.

[12] See Slater 1990(b), 13–4. For the more likely opposite view (reading aloud as the way in which this novel was delivered to its audience) see G. Vogt-Spira, "Indizien für mündlichen Vortrag von Petrons *Satyrica*", in *Strukturen der Mündlichkeit in der römischen Literatur*, ed. G. Vogt-Spira (Tübingen: 1990) 184–92. Cf. Introduction, n. 21.

[13] Collignon 1892, 121; Walsh 1970, 37; Slater 1990(b), 90.

murderous scorned lover much as the eponymous Epidicus talks himself into his role.'[14] Epidicus summarizes the difficult situation he has got himself into (Pl., *Epid.* 81–99), and becomes convinced that 'something must be somehow devised' (100).[15] In a similar way, Pinacium, the slave boy of Panegyris in Pl., *Sti.* 274–87, talks himself into the role of the running-slave, elaborately preparing himself for action. But the most amusing parallel of such role-playing is that of Phronesium in Pl., *Truc.* 449–64; in order to deceive Stratophanes, she changes from the role of the charming *meretrix* to that of the caring mother.[16] Likewise, at the end of his monologue (81.6) Encolpius is a Medea ready to kill, or an *Aeneas furibundus*, but the anti-climactic outcome of the murderous attempt argues for a farcical treatment of these models (82.4).

When the hero rushes out into the street, he is wholly identifiable with his model, Aeneas. His feelings and his appearance are described in every detail so that there is no doubt about what is going to happen:

> *furentisque more omnes circumeo porticus . . . attonito vultu efferatoque nihil aliud quam caedem et sanguinem cogito frequentiusque manum ad capulum, quem devoveram, refero.* (82.1–2)
> In the manner of a frenzied person I went round all the colonnades. . . . With a stupefied and fierce expression on my face I was thinking of nothing else than slaughter and blood, and kept putting my hand on the hilt I had vowed as sacrifice.

The ironical detail in this description is that Encolpius wears *phaecasia*, a kind of unmanly Greek shoes, worn by Fortunata at 67.4. The audience, however, does not see them until later when a highway robber of the night (*nocturnus grassator*, 82.2) notices them and manages to take away Encolpius' *arma*—and his soldier's role-playing at the same time.[17] Encolpius *furibundus* ends up *despoliatus* and grateful for the thief's intervention (82.4). He even philosophizes on this misfortune and believes that it was due to the divine power of *Fortuna* who has

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[14] Slater 1990(b), 90, n. 5; cf. Preston 1915, 269.

[15] Slater 1985, 21–4 discusses this procedure thoroughly. Cf., also, G.E. Duckworth, *T. Macci Plauti Epidicus* (Princeton Univ. Press: 1940) ad loc.

[16] Phronesium pretends that she has just borne a child, so she is dressed and she is walking accordingly; cf. 478–81, the preparations for the proper image of a woman recovering from birth; line 576 shows that she must appear to have a pale complexion.

[17] For soldiers in a mime-cast see Chor., *Apol. Mimorum* 109: ἔνι καὶ στρατιώτας ἰδεῖν.

other plans for him. The comic point here lies in the fact that there is not a serious juxtaposition of the plans of the hero in a Greek novel and the *consilium* of the goddess Τύχη. Nor should one take seriously Encolpius' philosophical generalizations on the subject of Tantalus and its comparison to the anxieties of the rich great man (82.5.1–4). The context forbids any moral assumptions. What could be more ridiculous than the transformation of Fortuna into a night-thief who stops Encolpius' plans to kill his boy-friend who had escaped with his ex-lover? This amusing anecdote resembles the subversive version of the Theseus—Ariadne story presented above (79.4–5).

It is difficult not to discern in Encolpius' epic appearance elements of the mime-spirit. Vergil's famous description of Aeneas in the siege of Troy must have been recognizable even to a less educated audience than that of the Neronian circle. Petronius' humiliating version presents an effeminate Aeneas deprived of his grandeur and his weapon, beaten by a thief to whom he feels grateful. But such distorted depictions of Vergilian scenes did not exist only in the imagination of an eccentric courtier. There is a Pompeian painting, dated A.D. *circa* 62–63, which shows a caricature of Aeneas' departure from Troy with Anchises on his shoulder and Ascanius following him holding his right hand. The three figures have long tails, canine heads and two of them a very long phallus. It has been suggested that the picture is more than a grotesque representation of Vergil's epic parodied by an artist, and that we have here a farcical scene from an actual stage-performance of a caricature of the Aeneas' legend; for the demands of the plot the actors would have dressed up as animals and delivered a strong anti-imperialistic message to their audience.[18] This sort of parody clearly belongs in the tradition of Atellan or mimic plays, and the Neronian date of the picture makes it more likely that Petronius was following the techniques of this tradition of farcical caricature when he presented his Encolpius as an effeminate and cowardly Aeneas.

II. *In pinacotheca: Sat. 83.1–90.7*

The employment of an art-gallery in the *Satyrica* as a place where Encolpius tries to find temporary solace, after Giton left him for

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[18] A. Maiuri, "La Parodia di Enea", *Bollettino d' Arte* 35 (1950), 108–12.

Ascyltus, introduces in the novel the narrative device of the ἔκφρασις, which is so widely used in Greek romances.[19] The hero does not find the comfort he was looking for, since the wonderful collection of pictures with various subjects (83.1) turns out to be, for the most part, a series of mythological love-affairs which constantly remind Encolpius of Giton's infidelity and subtly underline the menacing figure of the rival who causes harm to the happy couple. Thus the replacement of Ascyltus by Eumolpus in the homosexual triangle is effectively foreshadowed. The purpose of this section is to delineate briefly the theatrical characteristics in the personality of this new rival, Eumolpus, whose cunning hypocrisy will lead the heroes of the novel into more extraordinary adventures.

In Encolpius' eyes Giton becomes the kidnapped Ganymede (83.3; cf. 83.4), the abducted Hylas (83.3; cf. 83.5), and the unfortunate Hyacinthus (83.3; 83.5), but what makes the comparison ridiculous is that Giton deserted Encolpius of his own free will and not through the violent intrusion of a third person. Giton himself will deny this when he returns to Encolpius (91.2; 91.8), but his hypocritical play-acting there is obvious, since he will not hesitate to betray his lover for a second time in the near future with another rival, Eumolpus (94.4). In addition, one is amused to hear Encolpius subconsciously comparing himself with the vengeful Hercules who would chase the *improba Naida* (83.3; cf. 83.5), because one remembers how Encolpius was humiliated in his attempt to take revenge upon both his unfaithful companion and his impudent fellow-hustler (82.1–4).

Since the use of the ἔκφρασις is such a conventional feature of Greek and Latin literature,[20] and granted that Petronius makes ample use of different literary genres, it seems impossible to say with certainty what the particular source of inspiration is for the composition of this scene. It is more likely that Petronius was working within the general tradition of an ἔκφρασις, which portrays and reflects the events of the main action, rather than to argue for a conscious similarity between this incident and episodes such as the introductory scene of Achilles Tatius' romance or of Aeneas contemplating the picture of the Trojan war in the temple (*Aen.* 1.453–94).

[19] See the detailed discussion of the topic in S. Bartsch, *Decoding the Ancient Novel* (Princeton Univ. Press: 1989) 8–79.

[20] See Rosenblüth 1909, 45, n. 2; Headlam-Knox 1922, xliii; A.S.F. Gow, *Theocritus* (Cambridge: 1952) on Theocr., *Id.* 15.265–6; Cunningham 1971, 128.

Attention must also be drawn to the use of the ἔκφρασις as a narrative device in comedy. In Terence's *Eunuchus* 583–91, Chaerea, disguised as a eunuch, manages to find his way into the private quarters of the girl whom he loves; all his fears concerning the desire to fulfil his lust disappear when he sees a picture of how Juppiter, in the shape of golden rain, had managed to force his way into Danae's room.[21] The scenery of Terence's play is not an art-gallery, nor is there a detailed description of the picture, but the message for both love-stricken Chaerea and Encolpius remains the same. One of Sophron's mimes (Θάμεναι τὰ Ἴσθμια, 10), of which only one fragment survives, suggests that the farcical theatre had employed the device of a visit to a place, either festival or temple;[22] it seems likely that an ἔκφρασις may have been included in the plot, although we do not know in what way. This hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that Herodas has used the motif of the description of paintings in his Fourth Mime (Ἀσκληπιῷ ἀνατιθεῖσαι καὶ θυσιάζουσαι, 39–56a): he portrays two women, Κυννώ and Κοκκάλη, who go to the temple of Asclepius in Kos in order to offer their sacrifices, and make amusing comments on the works of art presented to the temple by other believers.[23]

The fundamental difference between the art-gallery scene in the *Satyrica* and the ἐκφράσεις in other literary texts lies in the ironical way in which Petronius uses his theatrically deceptive ἔκφρασις.[24] I have already discussed the risible contrast between how Encolpius interprets the situations expressed in the paintings and what really happened in his relationship with Giton. Encolpius is, as usual, melodramatic and over-acting, making hackneyed comments about the power and the influence of the particular works of art on his own feelings (83.1, 83.2). Under no circumstances should he be regarded as an expert art-critic any more than as an intellectual

[21] See P. Fabia, *P. Terenti Afri Eunuchus* (Paris: 1895) ad 584; Λ.Μ. Τρομάρας, *P. Terentius Afer. Eunuchus* (University Studio Press, Θεσσαλονίκη: 1991) ad 585.

[22] See A. Olivieri, *Frammenti della commedia greca e del mimo nella Sicilia e nella Magna Grecia* (Napoli: 1930) 181–2. The titles of Laberius' mimes *Compitalia* and *Saturnalia*, which signify festivals, may have presented a similar episode to that in Sophron's mime.

[23] Compare, e.g., Herod., 4.32–4 and Theocr., 15.82 with Petr., 88.5.

[24] See the acute discussion on the deceptive qualities of illusionistic art as presented in this episode in J. Elsner, "Seductions of art: Encolpius and Eumolpus in a Neronian picture gallery", *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 39 (1993), 30–47. One is reminded of the theatrical murals of Trimalchio's house.

scholasticus in the opening scene of the surviving novel. The description is not the detailed account of Homer, Vergil or Achilles Tatius, nor is intended to be so. Everything points to Encolpius' amusing distress, as he is painfully reminded of what he tries to forget and rhetorically (*ego dum cum ventis litigo*, 83.7) embarks upon an imaginary comparison of his misfortunes with those in the pictures. Thus Petronius' narrative resembles a theatrical after-piece in the manner in which it elaborates on the conventional topic of art-descriptions. Within this farcical frame the meeting between Encolpius and Eumolpus takes place.

The humorous context of the scene is reinforced by the sudden (*ecce autem*, 83.7) entrance 'on stage' of Eumolpus, precisely at the moment when Encolpius muses on his former rival, Ascyltus. Thus the implications of the old man's future influence on the lives of Encolpius and Giton are quite clear. The style of Encolpius' narration indicates the impact Eumolpus made on him with his shabby appearance, a sign of a man of letters (83.7), and a troubled facial expression classifies him, according to Encolpius, among those who seem to promise something important (83.7). From then on this white-haired poetaster will be the permanent companion of Encolpius and Giton, at least until the end of the surviving fragments. As will become apparent in his involvement in the episodes inside the inn (91–99), on board Lichas' ship (100–115), and in the legacy-hunting scheme at Croton (116 ff.), Eumolpus is a first-class trickster with a theatrical imagination, for he is often inspired by farcical motifs to take advantage of whatever situation presents itself. Perhaps his association with theatre is not an amateurish one, but is derived from the knowledge of an expert who participated in events at the theatre as a reciter and even won crowns of honour (83.8; 90.5). Nevertheless, his personality will mark dramatically the future of the two young lovers, since their ensuing adventures will be unquestionably coloured by the characteristics of the stage, and the orientation of their theatrical style will be almost totally mimic.

A brief self-introduction (83.8) gives all the aspects of Eumolpus' character, which for the moment are essential to understand his incomparable eloquence (cf. 124.2). Answering questions he himself asks, he occupies Encolpius' ears continuously from 83.9 to 87.10 and, after a brief interval (88.1) where Encolpius adopts again the role of the person who is interested in the decadence of various forms of human civilization (with Agamemnon it was rhetoric; with Eumolpus

it is the decline of fine arts and especially painting), he proceeds again in narrating non-stop from 88.2 to 89.1.1–65: see Encolpius' indignant reaction and serious threats at 90.3–4. All this time Eumolpus improvizes on the disgraceful financial condition of an honest educated person (83.10), philosophizes on possible reasons to explain this phenomenon (84.1–5), recounts his lusty experiences with a Pergamene boy (85.1–87.10),[25] offers a pompous, imprecise and banal opinion on the cause of the decline of fine arts (88.2–88.10), and, finally, recites sixty five iambics on 'The Siege of Troy' (89.1). Parody of poets who recited such commonplace themes, or even ridicule of Nero's similar poetic attempts, may have been Petronius' chief aims through Eumolpus' narration of the *Troiae Halosis*.[26] On the other hand this breathless combination of widely diverse topics is comic in itself and is reminiscent of the verbose bombast of a *miles gloriosus* of the farcical stage. I am not suggesting that Eumolpus' character is an imitation of a theatrical stock-figure. Specific elements, however, in his behaviour and the long series of scenic references connected with his name in the rest of the novel (94.15; 101.7; 103.2–4; 117.4 ff.; 140.5 ff.), emphasize the theatricality of his character. Encolpius does not realise that, by taking Eumolpus to his room, his mimic escapades will start all over again.

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[25] According to Soverini 1985, 1743 the contrast between the posture of Eumolpus as a morally upright art-critic and the reality of his lustful experiences with a Pergamene boy is due to the mimic theatre which employs such juxtapositions for comic effects. The best theatrical interpretation of this Milesian tale through the role-playing of the two main characters should be consulted in Slater 1990(b), 92–4.

[26] See Walsh, "Eumolpus, the *Halosis Troiae*, and the *De Bello Civili*", *Classical Philology* 63 (1968), 209; K.R. Bradley, *Suetonius' Life of Nero: An Historical Commentary*. *Collection Latomus* 157 (Bruxelles: 1978) ad Suet., *Nero* 38.2.

CHAPTER FIVE

AN ADULTERY-MIME

I. *Fabula inter amantes: Sat. 91.1–96.7*

Encolpius' meeting with the eccentric old poet Eumolpus in the art-gallery must have helped him slightly to forget for a while the painful and indignant memory of Giton leaving him for Ascyltus. Thus, when the two lovers meet again, quite unexpectedly, first in the baths (91.1; 91.3), probably before Eumolpus and Encolpius go to dine, and later on inside Encolpius' rented room (91.4), all angry feelings and resentments yield to a melodramatic reconciliation. Giton reveals his true (?) emotions and train of thoughts at the time of his unfaithful departure with Ascyltus (91.2; 91.8), while Encolpius faces the past events with a forgiving bitterness and a desire to forget (91.3; 91.6; 91.7).

The action is now set inside an *insula* (95.3),[1] where the anti-hero of the novel, his lover Giton and their new acquaintance, Eumolpus, have rented a *cella* 'room' (91.3; 94.4; 95.5). The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that the events which succeed one another at an incredibly fast pace are of a purely farcical nature, and suggest a direct influence of comedy and mime on these passages, in the sense that they could constitute a complete episode of a theatrical performance.[2]

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Encolpius Giton Eumolpus Bargates

Time and place are clearly stated and the scene is set for action: the darkness is deep (92.1), when Eumolpus, left by Encolpius at the

[1] On the meaning of the terms *insula* (95.3), *synoecium* (93.3), *cella* (94.4; 95.3,5,7) see H.T. Rowell, "*Satyricon* 95–96", *Classical Philology* 52 (1957), 217 ff., where there is a whole description of Encolpius' room within the inn! For the theatrical reading of the scene we need only point out that the action takes place in an interior space.

[2] See Collignon 1892, 278; Sullivan 1968(a), 222; Rankin 1969(a), 116; Walsh 1970, 77 ff.; Slater 1990(b), 105.

baths (91.3) but still keeping in mind the invitation to dinner (90.6), knocks at the door, interrupting perhaps the reviving intimacy of the young lovers. Encolpius, taking strict precautions against unwanted visitors, peers through a crack in the door (*per rimam foris*),[3] worried in case Ascyltus had arrived with Eumolpus (92.2). Eumolpus' entrance should be visualized as the first in a series of hasty entrances and exits, which add to the slapstick tone of the scene: enter Eumolpus (92.3), exit Giton (94.4), exit Eumolpus (94.7), enter Giton and Eumolpus (94.8), enter *deversitor cum parte cenulae* (95.1), exit Eumolpus with the *deversitor* and some of the lodgers (95.7). One is reminded of similar farcical situations in Aristophanic comedy: the continuous attempts of Philokleon to escape from his house through the back door, the front door, the chimney, the window, the roof-tiles, and under a donkey's belly;[4] or of the endless entrances and exits of the comic characters who intrude into Cloudcuckooland—sometimes arriving simultaneously from both parodoi—and interrupt Peisetairos during his sacrifices to the gods (*Birds* 851–1057).

Soon the farcical atmosphere starts to develop, because, when Encolpius hears Eumolpus praising Giton's graces, he is not at all pleased, but realizes that another rival is making advances to his beloved (92.4). Once more Encolpius' behaviour towards Giton and the latter's possible future relationship with other men (Ascyltus and Eumolpus) resemble strongly the mime-character of the ζηλότυπος, the jealous woman. Although Giton has not actually slept with Eumolpus, as Γάστρων, the slave, did with Ἀμφυταίη, Encolpius and Βίτιννα, the mistress, share common elements in their portrayal: envy which is transformed to anger, when facing the facts (*Sat.* 94.3; Herod., 5.10 ff.), and pleasure from their rival's tortures (*Sat.* 96.4; Herod., 5.40–53). The mistress in the Oxyrhynchus-mime of the Μοιχεύτρια, being in the same tradition of the theatrical type of the *furens femina*, exhibits violent instincts towards her slave in a situation similar to that of the Herodas-mime. Petronius is subtly providing the hints of Encolpius' forthcoming fury (94.5), when none of the members of this erotic triangle will be able to restrain themselves (94.1–7) and everything will lead to the spectacle of the *mimica mors* (94.15).

[3] The motif of peeping-through-a-hole occurs again, not without a theatrical significance, since a similar *foramen valvae* (96.1) will be the point of focus through which Encolpius watches another show, the fracas between Eumolpus and the *insularii*.

[4] Arist., *Wasps* 138 ff.; see D.M. MacDowell, "Clowning and slapstick in Aristophanes", *Themes in Drama* 10 (1988), 5–7.

A drink offered to Eumolpus by Giton is the cause of an interpolated narration, the funny episode at the baths (92.6–11), which characterizes Eumolpus as a person who recounts his experiences through a theatrical pattern with a strong element of farce and sex in it; the narration delineates also Encolpius' personality, since his comments at the end of the story (92.12–13) accord with his histrionic and hypocritical behaviour:

> *mutabam ego frequentissime vultum, iniuriis scilicet inimici mei hilaris, commodis tristis. utcumque tamen, tamquam non agnoscerem fabulam, tacui . . .*
> I was changing my facial expressions very often, certainly amused at my opponent's misfortunes, and sad at his luck. At any rate, however, I kept silent, as if I did not recognize anything in the story . . .

Baths as a setting are not unknown to theatrical genres. *Aquae Caldae* is a title recurrent in a *fabula togata* by Atta and in a mime by Laberius.[5] Although the element of indecency is clear even from the fragments, only speculations can be made on their plots. A careful reading of the Petronian text makes clear that Eumolpus passes quickly from the 'why' and the 'how'[6] he was thrown out of the baths, and focuses his audience's attention on one sight, in particular: the size of Ascyltus' testicles (*inguinum pondus*). The scene is described as a spectacle, or, rather, two spectacles, parallel and opposite to each other, and the comic effect is derived precisely from this juxtaposition. At one side of the scene an old man, half-naked, seeks desperately for Encolpius (92.6), while 'some boys laughed at him making insolent mimicries, as if he were insane' (92.8). At the other side, an indefatigable young man (*iuvenem laboriosum*, 92.9), stark-naked, wandering up and down and looking angrily for Giton is greeted with applause and the most timid admiration (*cum plausu et admiratione timidissima*) by a vast crowd (*frequentia ingens*, 92.8). Even the parallel gestures (*imitatione petulantissima*, 92.8—*cum plausu*, 92.9) signify that in this passage we have to deal with another scene structured as a show in front of a theatrical audience.[7] It is unlikely that the scene may be considered as an example of exhibitionism by the author.[8] Furthermore, it is

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[5] For the Laberius-mime see Ribbeck 1898, 340. For the Atta-fragment see Daviault 1981, 254, and his notes, 255–6.

[6] Müller's bracketing of the phrase *tamquam de theatro* at 92.6 as an intrusive gloss is a bold exclusion. Sandy 1974, 345 cites this phrase, together with 90.5, to prove Eumolpus' professional theatrical past.

[7] Cf. 26.4–5, 140.1–11, and see Gill 1973, 180.

[8] Sullivan 1968(a), 243. Preston 1915, 264 explains the strong phallic element of

Eumolpus who tells the story, a man whose participation in shows in the theatres defines his conception of the world: Eumolpus conceives his sexual intercourse with Philomela's daughter as a theatrical show at 140.6 ff. The point of the narration is not sensual but farcical, and the apophthegm at the end (*tanto magis expedit inguina quam ingenia fricare*, 92.11),[9] clearly a crude imitation of Publilius Syrus' *sententiae*, gives the final comic, non-moralistic tone to the short story: if you have a big penis, like Ascyltus, you can always find new clothes and wealth (92.10), whereas, if you have only a sharp mind, as Eumolpus likes to think of himself, you have to bribe in order to get even your own clothes back (92.11).

Eumolpus insists on replacing Ascyltus in the homosexual triangle despite Encolpius' dissent. In the poem that he composes so easily at 93.2, Eumolpus mentions all sorts of exotic birds as implicit objects of desire, that is Giton, and goes as far as the explicit statement or sexual invitation that a mistress surpasses a wife (*amica vincit / uxorem*, lines 8–9), implying, of course, himself and Encolpius, respectively. The tension is building up nicely in a farcical manner when Giton scolds Encolpius (93.4) for scolding Eumolpus because of his new poetical composition (93.3). Giton's reprimanding remarks on Encolpius' inhospitable behaviour encourage a closer amiability between himself and Eumolpus (93.4), and prepare the audience for Giton's adopting the role of the *cultus adulter* or 'refined adulterer' later on, at chapters 97–99; Eumolpus volunteers to undertake the simultaneous roles of *amator, poeta, paedagogus, custos* (94.1–2) for his new love. All these hilarious promises sound extremely pretentious and staged, but have the effect of constantly increasing Encolpius' *iracundia* 'wrath': he characterizes himself as *furiosus* 'frenzied' and as governed by *insania* 'madness' (94.6). Thus he is amusingly portrayed as the cuckold husband of a mime-piece who is being deceived in front of his very eyes and muses on the kind of revenge he would take, if he possessed the adequate means of punishment (94.3).

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this and other scenes in the novel (cf. 108.10; 129.1; 132; 140) as a 'more drastic form of buffoonery', derived from the mimic tradition of Southern Italy and Rome (see 264–5, n. 3).

[9] For a (needless) psycho-analytical interpretation of this obscene humour see Sullivan 1963, 80. Gagliardi, "Una nota Petroniana (*Satyr.* 92.9–11)", *Vichiana* 8 (1979), 200–2 regards this saying as 'una grottesca variazione del famoso *dictum* di Cicerone sul *genero exiguae staturae*': Macrob., *Sat.* 2.3.3 (*quis, inquit, generum meum ad gladium adligavit?*). A similar idea to that of the *Satyrica* is expressed in Juv., *S.* 1.40–1.

The situation becomes more complicated, and slapstick builds up to a climax when the very indulgent Giton exits quietly as if to fetch water (94.4) and leaves Encolpius in a state of frenzy (94.6). Giton's sudden departure, so erroneously conceived by Encolpius' hopeless sentimentality (see *prudenti absentia* at 94.4), was, almost certainly, nothing else but a signal for Eumolpus to take the key, lock Encolpius inside the room and run outside to find him. Schmeling regards this as one of the finest examples of 'Petronius' use of the *exclusus-amator* motif.' He clearly points out the similarities with elegiac poetry, observes that 'Petronius has executed one of the cleverest parodies of any motif' by turning the *exclusus* into an *inclusus amator*, defines the role of the door and the *rima* as the means through which the lover sees his separated lover, and even gives parallels to elegiac suicides in the *exclusus-amator* poems.[10] Schmeling, however, has not taken into consideration the mimic setting of the whole scene.[11] Each of his arguments can—and should—be explained by referring to the theatrical tradition which characterizes the general tone of the episode. Sandy points out the existence of a mimic παρακλαυσίθυρον which would make better sense as a source of inspiration for Petronius' conduct of this scene than an actual παρακλαυσίθυρον of elegiac poetry.[12] Encolpius' situation (enclosed in a space where the only access to his beloved is a locked door) is similar to that of many *amatores* of Roman Comedy: Phaedromus, a young gentleman of Epidaurus, is separated from his beloved Planesium, a girl belonging to Cappadox, the pimp, by a door. His relationship with this door is extremely peculiar. He identifies it with his girlfriend, addresses it in human terms, even serenades it.[13]

The desperate, *inclusus* Encolpius, like a proper hero of the ideal romance, who is separated from his partner, decides to commit suicide. His intention to hang himself is not made by chance. He chooses

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[10] See Schmeling 1971, 335 ff.

[11] I am referring to the theatrical context of what happened before, what will happen next, the author's interpretation of the scene as *mimicam mortem* (94.15) and his explicitly histrionic comment *fabula inter amantes luditur* (95.1).

[12] See Sandy 1974, 342; Wüst 1932, 1752 col. 65–7, and cf. McKeown 1979, 77–8 and 82, n. 27. On the influence of adultery-mime in Roman elegy see McKeown 1979, 72–6.

[13] Pl., *Curc.* 15 ff, 147–54. Cf. the dialogue between Toxilus, the slave, and Dordalus, the pimp, in Pl., *Per.* 564–72. On the personification of inanimate objects for comic effects in Plautus see E. Fraenkel, *Elementi Plautini in Plauto* (Firenze: 1960) 97–100. A list of κῶμοι as subjects for Greek mimes is in McKeown 1979, 77.

a way of dying similar to those in Greek tragedies where the heroine relieves herself of her burden by one of the most disgraceful and despised forms of death.[14] Likewise, Aristomenes, in Apul., *Met.* 1.16, is looking for the 'quickest method of death' and hangs himself after saying a most touching farewell to his *grabatulus*. It has been correctly assumed that there may be a common source for these two incidents in Petronius and Apuleius in the Milesian tale and the mime.[15] The context of the passages in Petronius argues strongly for such an interpretation while other explanations are probably due only to accidental similarities.[16]

Using different facial expressions from his repertoire to show grief, anger, and raving madness (94.9), Giton rushes in at the right moment to throw Encolpius violently on the bed (94.9), and to engage in a brief emotional account of his past unsuccessful attempts to commit suicide (again with weapons of a tragic play), when he was in Ascyltus' lodgings (94.11). Finally, adopting the role of the faithful concubine, he voluntarily cuts his throat—at least, that is what we all understand before Encolpius takes the *novacula* to follow the example of his lover—in order to show his devotion to his companion in life and death,[17] and collapses (94.12).

This is not the first time that Giton dares to face death, sure, of course, that he is not going to die! In the surviving passages of the novel, Giton 'died' for the first time at 80.4. He will 'die' again at 108.10.[18] Faked deaths were a stock-motif in the ancient romance. A harmless knife is described in detail as a stage prop in Achil. Tatius, 3.21.3–5, used for Leucippe's false death:

[14] See George 1966, 339 and N. Loraux, *Tragic ways of killing a woman* (Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: 1987) 7–17, 71, n. 8 for references to the texts.

[15] Walsh 1970, 31, and n. 1; 150, n. 2; cf. Wooten 1976, 70.

[16] P.H.L. Eggermont, "Thucydides IV.48.3 und Petronius, *Sat.* 94.8", *Mnemosyne* 9 (1941), 158–60 unnecessarily compares and connects Thucyd., 4.48.3 and *Sat.* 94.8 (the same way of hanging).

[17] In a similar tone the lovers Philaenium and Argyrippus exchange promises of dying together (Pl., *Asin.* 605–15). Richardson 1984, 117 sees in Giton's suicidal attempt 'the readiness of *erastes* and *eromenos* to endure pain and death to prove their devotion.' If there is something that characterizes constantly Giton as an *eromenos*, that is surely his infidelity!

[18] Bacon 1958, 268 claims wrongly that these simulated suicides display the emptiness of Encolpius' and Giton's feelings and are used as a kind of torture for themselves. Rankin 1969(a), 116 is more misleading; equally wrong is Arrowsmith 1972, 317, who connects this obviously mimic play-acting with the recurrent motif of luxury-and-death in the novel. See ch. six, nn. 48 and 49.

> Now, you see this trick sword? If you press it against a body, it retreats into the hilt as into a sheath. The audience believes the blade is penetrating the body, but actually it retires into the recessed hilt, leaving just enough point to cut the deceptive diaphragm and let the hilt itself rest flush against the victim. And when you draw the blade from the wound, the sword emerges from its recess exactly as the hilt is drawn upwards, and again misleads the spectators, for the blade appears to plunge down into the wound as far as it protrudes from the gadget.[19]

It is an instrument for theatrical performances by the Ὁμηρισταί, a group of actors whose performance Encolpius, Giton, and Ascyltus witnessed in Trimalchio's dinner-party (59.3–5). The point here is not that Petronius is following a technique found in the Greek romances, which after all is traced back to the mimic theatre, but that he visualizes the scene clearly as *mimicam mortem* (94.15), a farcical incident containing the motifs which were employed especially by the popular mimic stage; similarly, the phrase *dum haec fabula inter amantes luditur* (95.1)[20] forms a direct suggestion to Petronius' audience to watch the scene in the same way as he conceived it: a mime—play.

The instant arrival of the *deversitor cum parte cenulae* (95.1) signifies that a new stage in the development of events is going to begin. It is important to note that the *deversitor* for some reason understands that his tenants are playing the role of *ebrii* or *fugitivi* who are lying down on the floor in a most undignified way (95.1). His assumptions that they were planning to go away during the night to avoid paying the rent, and his threats that he is not an unprotected widow but M. Mannicius himself (95.3) have the pompous air of a domineering Plautine *senex* towards his cunning slave, and insult Eumolpus who, furious, starts beating him.

The ensuing fracas takes place outside the *cella* (95.5). The audience of the novel watches it through Encolpius' eyes who watches it through a hole in the door (*per foramen valvae*, 96.1)! Thus the author structures his narrative according to the structure of a show staged before an audience: not only does the content of the scene develop as simple slapstick, but also the actual setting becomes a theatrical

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[19] Translation by J.J. Winkler in B.P. Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley—Los Angeles—London: 1989) 219.

[20] For *fabula* as a 'theatrical piece, a play' cf. *Sat.* 20.5; 59.3; Varro, 6.55. For *ludere* as to 'represent a play' see *Th.L.L.*, sub v., II.B.b.a.

stage, where Encolpius is simultaneously the audience of the brawl-show and part of a second show for the audience of the *Satyrica*, since he provides another amusing spectacle of a parallel fight between himself and Giton (96.2–4):

> *Giton autem non oblitus misericordiae suae reserandum esse ostium succurrendumque periclitanti censebat. ego durante adhuc iracundia non continui manum, sed caput miserantis stricto acutoque articulo percussi. et ille quidem flens consedit in lecto.*
> Giton, however, not forgetting his compassion, was thinking that we should open the door and run to the rescue of him who was in danger. As my anger still lasted, I did not restrain my hand, but with a tight and sharp knuckle I struck forcibly the head of one so compassionate. And, indeed, he sat on the bed crying.

The main scene with Eumolpus is a mimic battle, a caricature of a fight, as it is so popularly presented on the mimic stage;[21] the weapons are not reminiscent of an epic conflict but are appropriate to the burlesque of the situation: a small jug made of earthenware (*urceolus fictilis*, 95.5), a *candelabrum* (95.6), a spit full of hissing intestines (*veru extis stridentibus plenum*, 95.8) and a fork taken from the meat-rack (*furca de carnario rapta*, 95.8). A dog of enormous size (*ingentis magnitudinis*, 95.8) completes the list.[22] The people involved in the battle, namely *coctores*, *insularii*, *anus lippa* evoke Choricius' description of mime-characters.[23]

Attention should be drawn to another point which confirms a theatrical interpretation of the earlier *rixa*. Encolpius watches everything *per foramen valvae* and his reaction to the sight is *favebamque ego vapulanti* (96.1). What is the meaning of *faveo* in this passage?

> Encolpius is quite naturally using the word *favere* as it was used in connection with games or contests: to encourage a certain side or

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[21] In fact, there is no real violence in the *Sat.*-passage. Eumolpus, in spite of the dreadful description of the fight through Encolpius' imaginative mind, has only a slight wound in his eyebrow (98.7)! Cf. the brawl in the opening scenes of the *Amphitruo*. Moering 1915, 15 draws attention to non-mimic texts in which a brawl takes place: Arist., *Wasps* 254 ff; *Knights* 411 ff., 1236; Axionicus in *CAF* II, p. 414 Kock; Pl., *Mil.* 445, *Amph.* 408; Ter., *Ad.* 215, Cic., *Ad Att.* 1.18. Cf. ch. six, nn. 45 and 46.

[22] On dog-acts see Plut., *De Sollert. Animal.* 973E–974A; Laberius' *Scylax* (102) and *Catularius* (32–5) (Bonaria). Cf. Sandy 1974, 335, n. 13; Balsdon 1969, 305; Bieber 1961, 137 and fig. 497; Beare 1964, 155 and 319. Trimalchio's dog (64.7, *ingentis formae*) is surely in the same tradition. See ch. three, nn. 110–2.

[23] See Chor., *Apol. Mimorum* 110. The extremely detailed description of the blear-eyed old woman cannot be explained in any way other than that the author wants to point out precisely her figure as a stock-character in comedy. See Duckworth 1994, 254.

performer with shouting and applause. He is ironically playing the part of a *fautor* or 'fan' of Eumolpus who has descended into the arena and armed only with a wooden candlestick is pitting himself against the slaves, its drunken customers, and the tenants of the house . . . We can almost hear his jeering words: *euge, Eumolpe; caede, occide, iugla, iugla.*[24]

The finale of the fracas-scene is signalled by another arrival, like the one which started the fight. Bargates, the manager (*procurator*), a *pedibus aeger* (96.4),[25] is carried in right into the brawl, perhaps angry at having being disturbed at his dinner (96.4). He recognizes Eumolpus among the fighters (96.6) and addresses the rest of the crowd in the same theatrical terms that the *deversitor* used for Encolpius and Giton: *rabiosa barbaraque voce in ebrios fugitivosque diu peroravit*, . . . 'in a frenzied and uncivilized voice he pleaded against drunkards and runaway slaves for a long time . . .' (96.5). Bargates' sudden appearance reinforces the slapstick tone of the incident by increasing the number of people on stage. This is not, however, the end of the hero's sentimental problems, for, when, in the next scene of this mimic interlude, both his rivals will demand to take Giton away from him, Encolpius will have to stage an adultery-mime in order to deceive them.

II. *Mimicum moechimonium: Sat. 97.1–99.4*

Both Roman novelists have employed the subject of adultery in the Milesian tales included in their novels.[26] The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that this motif occurs as the theme of a mime-episode in the passages 97–99 of the novel which do not constitute a Milesian tale.

Encolpius' pleasure in Eumolpus' sufferings did not last long. In fact, the situation turns against him now that an announcer with a municipal slave and quite a large number of people (*praeco cum servo publico aliaque sane <non> modica frequentia*), among whom Ascyltus makes

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[24] Rowell 1957, 225. Cf. Hor., *Epist.* 1.18.66; Tac., *Annal.* 13.28; Suet., *Tit.* 8.2. The *OLD* classifies this Petronian passage in the category of *faveo*, meaning 'approve of'. So does the *Th.L.L.* which gives, though, a list of passages *speciatim de studio speculatorum*. On Encolpius' speculative and amusing exhortations to Eumolpus see *ILS* (ed. H. Dessau) II.1, 5134 and Campanile 1964, 117. For an opposite view see F. Bornmann, "Petronio c. 96.1", *Maia* 15 (1963), 4–5, who suspects a *lacuna* between *favebamque ego* and *vapulanti.*

[25] Bargates suffers from Eumolpus' theatrical illness (cf. 140.6).

[26] Petr., *Sat.* 111–2; Apul., *Met.* 9.5 ff., 9.14 ff., 9.17 ff., 9.26 ff. See Walsh 1970, 13 ff., 167.

a threatening re-appearance, enters the *stabulum* to look for Giton (97.1). The point of focus through which Encolpius watches all these events is still the hole on the door (*foramen valvae*) of 96.1; the theatrical structure, therefore, of the scene is still valid and continues up to 97.7, where the action is transferred again inside the *cella.*

Ascyltus' arrival is described by Encolpius in quite an unusual way: the *frequentia* is <*non*> *modica*, the *fax* produces smoke rather than light, the *praeco*—a favourite imitation of the farcical theatre (Pl., *Sti.* 218–33)—does not simply announce but shouts his message (*proclamavit*, 97.1); Ascyltus comes in last, dressed in a multicoloured garment (*amictus discoloria veste*, 97.3), which probably gets dirty from the smoky air, and offers the *mille nummos* of the reward for Giton's detection on a *lanx argentea* (97.3). All the details create the impression of a smoky, dirty, noisy, disreputable, though spectacular sight, rather than the vengeful return of the rival—'husband'.

The situation calls for immediate action on the part of Encolpius, who takes the initiative to stage-direct and play the leading role in a farce. While Ascyltus wanders through all the rooms along with an official agent (97.7), Encolpius orders Giton

> *ut raptim grabatum subiret annecteretque pedes et manus institis, . . . extentus infra grabatum scrutantium eluderet manus.*
> to get under the bed quickly and attach his feet and hands to the bands . . . , so that, stretched out under the bed, he could escape from the hands of those who were searching. (97.4)

The bed functions as a stage-prop in this outrageous farce.[27] It was used earlier for Encolpius' attempt to hang himself (94.8). It will be used at 140.7 as a place of control under which the slave Corax will place himself and conduct the farcical intercourse between his master Eumolpus and Philomela's daughter. It is used now as a hiding-place in a most peculiar way: people can hide themselves under the bed, but not in the way Encolpius asked Giton to do! Although this extraordinary trick is meant to create an Homeric atmosphere, we shall see that the overall frame of events ridicules any intellectual pretensions and shows Petronius' theatrical parody of acclaimed literary texts at its best.

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[27] Cf. Chrysost., 6.558 = Migne, *P.G.* 56.543: οὐ δέδοικας, ἄνθρωπε, τοῖς αὐτοις ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τὴν κλίνην τὴν ἐπὶ της ὀρχήστρας βλέπων, ἔνθα τὰ μυσαρὰ τελεῖται τῆς μοιχείας δράματα, καὶ τὴν τράπεζαν ταύτην τὴν ἱεράν, ἔνθα τὰ φριχτὰ τελεῖται μυστήρια;

Despite the textual problems,[28] the similarities with the well-known Odyssean context (ι 425 ff.) are obvious and have already been pointed out by scholars.[29] The setting, however, of the scene is not to be sought in the mythological world of the *Odyssey*, but in the mimic presentation of ordinary everyday life: the husband returns home unexpectedly. His wife is in bed with another man. The lover must hide himself in a safe place and the wife must deceive the husband, as best she can, in order to avoid arousing suspicions. The analogies of this situation with the behaviour of the homosexual trio are apparent. I shall return to the distribution of roles later on. Although the adultery-setting of the episode is clearly underlined by the author, the epic reference of the text should not be by any means underestimated. This episode presents a good example of Petronius' usual methods: he dresses the low-life adventures of his novel with eminent literary garments in order to make the contrast between reality and illusion a comic device, derived from the popular subliterary mime.[30] The scene in question is clearly a mimic travesty of the Homeric text, for the brave and cunning Ulysses is personified by the effeminate Giton who is eventually tracked down in a miserable, rather than heroic, condition: *remota etiam culcita videt Ulixem, cui vel esuriens Cyclops potuisset parcere* 'when the stuffed mattress was moved back too, he sees a Ulysses whom even a starving Cyclops would have been able to spare' (98.5).

As long as the theatre of the mime existed, adultery was one of its most popular subjects, although it was stigmatized as a cause of moral degeneracy even from Cicero's time.[31] We do not know anything

[28] The *crux* in 97.4 (*ac sic ut olim Ulixes †pro† arieti adhaesisset*) remains, I think, still unsolved. For a summary of the suggestions and a new possible reading see A. La Penna, "L' ariete di Polifemo in Petronio", *Maia* 35 (1983), 123–4, who suggests *prono arieti*. M. Heseltine-E.H. Warmington, *Petronius* (Cambridge, Mass. / London: 1987) 228, n. 2 defend the transmitted text without any interpolations, but argue for a misplacement of certain words. Warmington's final reading: *ac sic ut olim Ulixes adhaesisset extentus infra grabatum pro ariete* ('under the bed in place of a ram') *scrutantium eluderet manus*.

[29] Collignon 1892, 317 is, as usual, the first. On the systematic parody of *Odyssey* 9–12 in *Sat.* 97 ff. see Courtney 1991, 45, and cf. Rankin 1969(a), 115–6. Gagliardi 1980, 104, n. 38 speculates that there may have been a mime which dealt with this Odyssean scene, and that from this mime Petronius derived the idea for Giton's hiding-place.

[30] For the comic effects of this contradiction see Sandy 1969, 293–303.

[31] *Testimonia* on the adultery-mime are conveniently provided by R.W. Reynolds, "The adultery mime", *Classical Quarterly* 40 (1946), 77–84 and Kehoe 1984. They range from the first century B.C. to the sixth century of the Christian era: Laberius,

specific about the structure or plot of these mimes. Speculations have been made that an adultery-mime

> regarded in its barest form . . . may have consisted of a single scene . . . which was placed indoors, perhaps in the woman's bedroom; . . . It began with the two lovers on the stage. On the entry of her husband, the woman concealed her paramour in the chest, where he stayed until he was almost smothered . . . At last he was discovered, and the three characters appeared on the stage together for the dénouement.[32]

Variations on the development of the plot were surely made according to the initiatives of the principal actors. Neologisms, such as *moechimonium*, *adulterio*, *adulteritas*, referring to adultery in a Laberius-fragment (*ex inc. fab.* 17 Ribbeck), show that fun was made of the subject both in plot and in language through puns.

The most detailed description of an adultery mime, given by an ancient non-theatrical text, is in Ovid, *Tristia* 2.497–514.[33] He bitterly complains about his unfair banishment, and puts forth as an argument for the righteousness of his works the fact that adultery-mimes are incredibly obscene and yet so popular. A careful comparison of his description of the cast of adultery-mimes and Encolpius' narration of his experiences in this section of the novel shows that the Petronian scene is a *scaenicum adulterium*. There are three main characters in the scene, and three in the adultery-mime: the *cultus adulter*, the *callida nupta*, and the *stultus / stupidus vir*.[34] Giton becomes the *cultus adulter*. His intellectual as well as physical graces were praised by both Eumolpus and Encolpius in the past (92.3; 93.4). He is the one who hides himself under the bed in such a way that 'he beat Ulysses with equal cunning' (*Ulixem astu simillimo vicit*, 97.5).[35] Whereas

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Compitalia 33–5; Hor., *S.* 2.7.53 ff.; Ovid, *Tristia* 2.497–514; Sen., *Contr.* 2.4; Juv., *S.* 6.41–4 and 8.196–7; Tertul., *Apol.* 15; Minuc. Felix, *Octav.* 37.12; Lampridius, *Heliog.* 25.4; Salvianus, *De Gub. Dei* 6.(3).19; John Chrysost., *P.G.* 56.543 and 57.72; Choric., *Apol. Mim.* 30–5. Cf. Beare 1964, 156; Duckworth 1994, 15; McKeown 1979, 72 and 80, nn. 8 and 10. Adultery was also a subject in the phlyax-vases: see Olivieri 1930, 160.

[32] Reynolds 1946, 81; Kehoe 1984, 106 speaks of a still more elaborate presentation of the subject, in which more persons (e.g., slaves) and additional scenes (e.g., the agreement between the lover and the mistress' maid) were included.

[33] For brief comments on this passage see G. Luck, *P. Ovidius Naso. Tristia. Band II. Kommentar* (Heidelberg: 1977) ad loc.

[34] I owe this classification to Reynolds 1946, 82. It is based on the characters taken from the actual Latin texts.

[35] Cf. the *aliqua novitate* in Ovid, *Trist.* 2.505. Walsh 1970, 99 rightly comments: 'These literary references are of the banal kind appropriate to the narrative equivalent of the low stage.' M. Bieber, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theatre* (Princeton,

a usual *adulter* has to face possible death by suffocation by hiding in a chest,[36] if he does not want to be caught by the husband, Giton has to hold his breath in an open-air hiding-place (98.4) and to endure the bugs (*sciniphes*, 98.1). Encolpius is the *callida nupta* who not only finds a perfect hiding-place for her lover but deceives her husband in a clearly theatrical way:

> *ego ne suspicioni relinquerem locum, lectulum vestimentis implevi uniusque hominis vestigium ad corporis mei mensuram figuravi . . . ut fidem haberent fictae preces, . . .* In order not to leave any space for suspicions, I filled the small bed with clothes, and formed the shape of a single person according to the measure of my body. (97.6) . . . to give credence to my hypocritical appeals, . . . (97.9)

In a moving monologue he pretends to long for Giton's return and even agrees to offer himself a victim to Ascyltus' *iracundia* (97.9), if only he showed him his companion (97.9). Encolpius' offer of his neck for slaughter in a Euripidean manner (cf. Eur., *IA* 1560 ff.) is an exact copy of Giton's convincing play-acting earlier on (80.3–4; cf. 94.9–11; 108.10), and for this reason it fools Ascyltus, the *stupidus vir*, who, at some point later in the text, leaves the room without suspecting anything. The comic tone of this *tragicomoedia* is given by the municipal slave (*servus publicus*), who searches even the holes on the walls (*omniaque etiam foramina parietum scrutatur*, 98.1), in case he finds Giton there.[37] Encolpius continues to play a tragic role even when Eumolpus, the second rival and, therefore, another *stultus vir*, appears intending to give Giton away to the *praeco* (98.2). Encolpius

New Jersey: 1961)[2] 10, fig. 30 shows a vase of a satyr-drama performance: Odysseus and companions are about to blind the Cyclops. Perhaps there followed a scene in which they escaped from his cave. On the comic manner in which Odysseus' escape from the Cyclops' cave may have been portrayed by Greek comedy writers see A. Garassino, "Ulisse nel teatro greco", *Atene e Roma* 11 (1930), 243–7. Epicharmus wrote a *Cyclops* and Kratinos an *Odysseis* but the most farcical treatment of Odysseus' escape is in Arist., *Wasps* 180 ff. On the comic Odysseus vs. Cyclops see, also, E.D. Phillips, "The comic Odysseus", *Greece & Rome* 28 [2nd. S. 6] (1959), 61 and 64. Preston 1915, 267 notes that the comic use of hiding-places was a familiar τόπος in Attic comedy as well, and refers to Xenarchus 4K: 9–11 (μὴ κλίμακα στησάμενον εἰσβῆναι λάθρᾳ / μηδὲ δι' ὀπῆς κάτωθεν εἰσδῦναι στέγης / μηδ' ἐν ἀχύροισιν εἰσενεχθῆναι τέχνῃ).

[36] See Juv., 6.44, and cf. Duff 1970, ad loc. Also, Hor., *S.* 2.7.59–61; Apul., *Met.* 9.24. For more parallels on the topic *de homine sub cista celato* see Bonaria 1965, 223.

[37] This is humour of the absurd type in the Plautine tradition: in *Amph.* 432 Sosia believes that Mercury was hidden inside the jug of wine he was drinking from, when he was in the tavern. In *Epid.* 22–3 Epidicus assumes that his master had been carried inside a bag or a purse.

pretends again to be once more the deserted lover and challenges Eumolpus to find Giton and give him back to Ascyltus (98.3). The highly sentimental tone of his words together with his position as a suppliant (98.3), another theatrical posture, would definitely deceive Eumolpus as well, if only Giton, unable to hold his breath any longer (*collectione spiritus plenus*, 98.4), had not sneezed three times continuously, shaken the bed (98.4), and revealed his hiding-place. What happens if the husband finds out where the lover is hiding? Horace, *S.* 2.7.59–60 and 68–9, supposes that the lover escapes unnoticed and that he even returns to the faithless wife. Ovid, *Tristia* 2.505–6, seems to imply that the play reached its end before this meeting between husband and lover took place or that it did not happen at all. Juvenal, *S.* 1.35–6 makes the husband turn a blind eye to the whole affair, because he is bribed by the wife and the lover. Apuleius, *Met.* 9.28 describes the revenge of the husband on his wife by enjoying the lover himself as well. Choricius, *Apol. Mimorum* 54 takes the couple to court but there is a happy ending despite the threats of the judge (30). Petronius follows a way similar to that of Apuleius: the lover-Giton takes care of the 'husband'-Eumolpus. His kind treatment is subtle and sensational (98.7). Exaggerated statements and heart-breaking confessions take place (98.8–9), tears run in abundance, repentance and forgiveness succeed one another (99.2).[38] Among these confessions Giton defines their next role, which will be exploited further by the author in the scene on board Lichas' ship: *Pater carissime, in tua sumus custodia* 'Dearest father, we are in your custody' (98.8).

Ascyltus will not appear again in the surviving parts of the novel. The three main *personae* will continue their adventures from now on as a patron and his two wards. Encolpius does not forget to add the appropriate *sententia* to the whole episode, similar to those of Publilius Syrus,[39] and the scene ends with a happy kiss![40]

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[38] Cf. Choricius, *Apol. Mimorum* 110 (on mime-actors): Τὶς δὲ οὐκ ἂν ἀπείποι καταλέγειν ἐπιχειρῶν ὅσα μιμοῦνται; . . . νεανίσκον ἐρῶντα, θυμούμενον ἕτερον, ἄλλον τῷ θυμουμένῳ πραΰνοντα τὴν ὀργήν.

[39] *similiter in pectoribus ira considit: feras quidem mentes obsidet, eruditas praelabitur* (99.3). Cf. P. Syrus, *Sent.* (75) (Friedrich): *Bonum ad virum cita mors est iracundiae*. Walsh 1970, 99, n. 1 mentions Seneca as the target of this *sententia*. Cf. also Eumolpus' *sententia*: *tanto magis expedit inguina quam ingenia fricare* (92.11).

[40] *Sat.* 99.4: *ecce etiam osculo iram finio*. Cf. also Choric., *Apol. Mimorum* 30 (ἐπεὶ δὲ ὅλον παιδιά τις ἐστι τὸ χρῆμα, τὸ πέρας αὐτοις εἰς ᾠδήν τινα καὶ γέλωτα λήγει. Πάντα γὰρ εις ἀναψυχὴν μεμηχάνηται καὶ ῥαστῴνην).

CHAPTER SIX

THE ADVENTURES ON BOARD LICHAS' SHIP AND ON THE WAY TO CROTON

I. *Mimicum naufragium: Sat. 99.5–115.20*

The sea-trip, which usually ends up with a shipwreck or with an attack by pirates, occurs in almost all of the surviving Greek romances, causing misfortunes for the heroes and enjoyment for the readers of the novels.[1] The reason for these trips is not always justified by the author or the narrator, and in such cases the audience of the novel simply accepts—or, rather, expects—its introduction in the plot as a narrative device for more adventures and entertainment to come. This is the case in Petronius' novel. The reason for the voyage is not apparent from the text. After the mimic interlude at the inn (92.1–99.4), where Encolpius, the anti-hero of the novel, and his lover, Giton, had rented a room, the two hustlers entrust themselves to the custody of Eumolpus (98.8), the manic poetaster, who will accompany them until the end of the novel's surviving fragments. The latter, having previously decided to take a sea-journey at some time (101.3), suggests in a rather casual manner (99.4): *Itaque, quod bene eveniat, expedite sarcinulas et, vel sequimini me vel, si mavultis, ducite.* 'Well then, may everything turn out well; prepare your belongings and either follow me or, if you prefer, lead the way'. Eumolpus' instruction suggests that Encolpius and Giton have already agreed to embark with him.

A knock at the door signals the beginning of the episode on board Lichas' ship: it is a fierce sailor bidding them to hurry, but the wording of the text *crepuit ostium impulsum* 'the door was pushed and creaked open' (99.5) reminds one of the typical formula *sed crepuit foris* which is used in comedy to announce the entrance of a new person on stage, who will advance the development of the plot.[2] The purpose

[1] See F.M. Fröhlke, *Petron. Struktur und Wirklichkeit* (Frankfurt: 1977) 50–4.

[2] Pl., *Amph.* 496; *Aul.* 665; *Bacch.* 234, 610, 1057; *Cas.* 163, 813, 874, 936; *Curc.* 486; *Men.* 348, 523; *Mil.* 154, 270, 328; *Most.* 1063; *Per.* 404; *Poen.* 741. Note that a similar knock opened other staged episodes in the novel: the Quartilla-scene (16.1) and the mimic interlude at the inn (92.1). Petronius seems to use conventional theatrical techniques to pass from one episode to another.

of this section is to examine whether there are any theatrical elements in the events that take place during that trip, which can prove that the conventional voyage becomes in Petronius' hands an entertaining spectacle with the spirit of a low theatrical piece.[3] The theatricality of this scene will be demonstrated through its staged setting, the type-cast comic characters involved in it, the farcical intrigues in its plot, the employment of theatrical devices for comic effect (dreams, recognition, trial-scene, brawl, false death), and the melodramatic tone of the dialogue between Encolpius and Giton during the shipwreck.

The nature of a sea-trip itself, inserted as one event in a series of adventures in a novel, inclines one to think that it can take place only in non-theatrical texts, where its description can be achieved through narration and not through actual representation on stage. Thus, it seems almost certain, at first sight, that Petronius' inspiration for this episode is either the Greek romance or other literary narrative, such as epic or folk-tales.[4] Attention should be drawn, however, to the connection of the motif of sea-adventures with the stage.

One of the earliest and most notable examples of a sea-trip on stage is in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, where the spectator witnesses the introduction of a ferry,[5] which belongs to Charon, and the brief journey of Dionysus in this boat, while the two characters are sailing on the waters of a lake *en route* to the Underworld. Although it is made clear that Dionysus embarks at line 190 and that both he and Charon disembark at 270, the questions of how the boat was brought into the orchestra and by what means the journey was made possible, remain open to the fertile imagination of each reader or stage-director. Whether the representation of the ferry (if, indeed, there was a vehicle at all) was a boat wheeled out on the *ekkyklema*, or

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[3] Although Collignon 1892, 276–9 noticed some of the theatrical elements of this episode, it was Rosenblüth 1909, 48–9, who argued first, though briefly, for the interpretation of the scene as 'Der Mimus auf dem Schiffe'. Since then there has been no extant treatment of the whole episode from a theatrical point of view, but only occasional remarks, whose contribution to the staged character of the Petronian passages will be acknowledged during this section.

[4] See Heinze 1899, 508–12; cf. E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer* (Leipzig: 1900) 178–209.

[5] For more (possible) representations of ships on stage see Epich., Σειρῆνες 123–4 Kaibel, and Phillips 1959, 62; Epich., 'Οδυσσεὺς Ναυαγος 105–6 Kaibel; Kratin., 'Οδυσσης 135–50 Kock, and M. Whittaker, "The comic fragments in their relation to the structure of Old Attic Comedy", *Classical Quarterly* 29 (1935), 182 ff.

brought on stage by the *mechane*, or was pushed by someone, or had wheels itself,[6] the fact remains that the theatrical soil could be easily transformed into water in the imagination of the audience,[7] and this abstract perception of the orchestral space enabled the poet (Aristophanes was probably not the first to make use of such a stage-setting)[8] to exploit any kind of scenery that would be essential for his play's action.

Rudens is the only surviving Plautine comedy that has as its setting not house-fronts but a coast. The stage represents in the background a temple and a cottage, situated on the coast near Cyrene. The Plautine originality in the use of this scenery is that the sea is supposed to be visible to the actors: Daemones catches sight of Labrax and Charmides floating in the sea, and points to the right (148–9, 152, 154–7). With that device the audience visualizes clearly what is *not* happening on the stage together with the characters of the play and at the actual time of the events—not afterwards through the narrative means of a monologue or a messenger's speech. A clear example of this is contained in lines 148–55, where Sceparnio, the slave, spots two girls in a boat, Palaestra and Ampelisca, and gives a vivid description of their struggle, interspersed with lively exclamations (164, 170, 177); one of them is cast out of the boat by the waves but manages to reach the shore and takes the road towards the cottage. The other leaps out of the boat, and makes her way out of the surf, but turns in the wrong direction. All this is seen by Skeparnio and dramatically narrated by him. Plautus does not mention the precise name of the Greek original on which his *Rudens* is based. A reference to Diphilus' name in relation to the setting of the scene (*huic esse nomen urbi Diphilus Cyrenas voluit* 'Diphilus wanted the name of this town to be Cyrene') (32) makes a strong case for assuming that he was the author of the Greek play, which presented, probably, similar scenery. Moreover, Plautus' *Vidularia*, of which only fragments are preserved, seems to suggest that the action here too

[6] These tentative suggestions can be found in M. Bieber, "The entrances and exits of actors and chorus in Greek plays", *American Journal of Archaeology* 58 (1954), 280–1; Arnott 1962, 102–3; K.J. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* (London: 1972) 179–80; C.W. Dearden, *The Stage of Aristophanes* (Univ. of London: 1976) 172.

[7] It is sufficient that Dionysus himself says so in his answer to the wondering Xanthias (189–90): Ξα. τουτὶ τὶ ἐστι; (pointing, perhaps, at the circular orchestra) Δι. τοῦτο; λίμνη νὴ Δία αὕτη 'στιν ἣν ἔφραζε, καὶ πλοῖόν γ' ὁρῶ.

[8] See A.M. Wilson, "A Eupolidean precedent for the rowing scene in Aristophanes' *Frogs*?", *Classical Quarterly* 68 (1974), 250–2.

takes place on the sea-coast, and, perhaps, the same thing happened in its New Comedy Greek original.[9]

By Petronius' time the stage is occupied mainly by the popular mimes, whose repertory included realistic subjects from everyday-life handled in a grotesque way. When Seneca (*De Ira* 2.2.4–5) speaks of the false grief of an audience when it watches the staged shipwrecks in the mimes, one assumes that both the trip and the shipwreck were also stock-motifs in these performances:

> *movet mentes et atrox pictura et iustissimorum suppliciorum tristis adspectus: id est, quod adridemus ridentibus et contristat nos turba maerentium et effervescimus ad aliena certamina. Quae non sunt irae, non magis quam tristitia est, quae ad conspectum mimici naufragii contrahit frontem, non magis quam timor, qui Hannibale post Cannas moenia circumsidente lectorum percurrit animos . . .*
>
> A frightful picture and the grim sight of even the most fair punishments upset our minds: more specifically, we smile in response to those who smile at us, while a crowd of mournful people makes us depressed, and again we boil up with other people's quarrels. However, these feelings are no more anger, than that is gloom, which makes us frown when we watch the staged shipwrecks in the mimes, no more anger than that is fear, which passes through our minds when we read how Hannibal after Cannae surrounded the walls [of Rome] . . .

The philosophical view that Seneca expounds here is richly adorned with references to visual entertainment connected with the stage, and ought to be considered in conjunction with the evidence, put forth by Dio Cassius (61.12.2) and Tacitus (*Ann.* 14.6), on the mechanical devices which produce such shipwrecks. Dio reports that Nero's scheme to kill his mother, Agrippina, by drowning was conceived when her plotters watched a performance in the theatre, in which a ship automatically split into two pieces, let out some wild animals, and then came together again so as to be able to float on water. Dio characterizes this plot a 'tragedy' (τραγῳδίαν) (61.13.3), and Tacitus adds that Agrippina became suspicious of her alleged accident, because she compared the way her boat sank to similar automatic contrivances of the theatre (*terrestre machinamentum*).[10] In general, extravagant sea-spectacles were popular in artificial water-constructions, and Martial affords remarkable accounts of such events which may have presented a ship sailing.[11]

[9] See E.A. Sonnenschein, *T. Macci Plauti Rudens* (Oxford: 1891) xiii–xiv.

[10] Roman technology had advanced considerably in order to stand up to popular demand for stunning visual effects during shows: see ch. three, n. 69.

[11] See Martial, *Spect.* 26 and Gehman 1922, 100. On mythological scenes

One of the two extant fragments of the mimes that have come down to us through the Oxyrhynchus papyri, namely the Χαρίτιον-mime, dated in the second century A.D., offers one more interesting theatrical parallel.[12] The setting represents the coast of a barbarian country, in which Χαρίτιον, the heroine of the mime, was somehow carried off. The surviving fragment describes the way in which she evaded the barbarians and their king with the help of her brother, his friend, a buffoon slave, and the rest of the crew which had come to her rescue. Judging from the Plautine *Rudens*, we may argue that the employment of a shore, instead of a house, as a stage-scene does not necessarily add anything radically original in the staging-technique.[13] This mime, however, like its Aristophanic predecessor, introduces the impressive device of the actual representation of a ship, which all the *personae* had boarded as they approached the shore, that is, the stage. Χαρίτιον bids her brother to hurry (105–7 Page):

> Α. δεῦ[ρ', ἀδελφέ, θᾶσσον. (ἆρ') ἅπανθ' ἕτοιμα τυγχάν[ει;
> Γ. πάντα γ[ά]ρ. τὸ πλοῖον ὁρμεῖ πλησίον. τί μέλλετε;
> σοί, [λέ]γω, πρωρεῦ, παράβαλε δεῦρ' ἄγων τὴ[ν ναῦν ταχύ.
> Come, brother, quickly; is everything ready?
> Yes, everything. The boat is approaching quickly. What are you waiting for? Hey you, helmsman, I am talking to you, bring the ship alongside here at once.

And later on he asks: 'Are you all aboard?' And everybody cries: 'Aboard' (110).

These pieces of evidence demonstrate that the stage was a possible source of inspiration for the learned Petronius along with other literary genres, since theatre not only employed aspects of a sea-trip (departure, shipwreck) but exploited them in a new manner.

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presented spectacularly in orchestras full of water (*lacunae*) inside Roman amphitheatres of late antiquity see G. D' Ippolito, "Draconzio, Nonno e gli 'Idromimi'", *Atene e Roma* 7 (1962), 1–14, and G. Traversari, *Gli spettacoli in acqua nel teatro tardo-antico* (Roma: 1960) 57–61, 107–17.

[12] For a line-by-line theatrical interpretation of this mime see G. Knoke, *De 'Charitio' Mimo Oxyrhynchio* (Kiel: 1908) 15–30. A good musical and theatrical analysis of the piece can be found in E. Rostrup, "Oxyrhynchos Papyri III.413", *Oversigt over det kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskabs Forhandlinger* (1915), 76–8. On possible influences upon it by certain situations in *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, *Helen*, and *Cyclops*, see Knoke 1908, 12–5. Euripides' *Iphig. Taur.*, which had similar scenery, was exploited also by the phlyax-comedy: see Rhinthon, Ἰφιγένεια ἁ ἐν Ταύροις, in Olivieri 1930, 129–30.

[13] B. Warnecke, "Zum Plautinischen *Rudens*", *Philologische Wochenschrift* 44 (1924), 499–501 was the first to detect similarities of plot and character between Plautus' play and this mime. Common elements with Petronius' novel are the existence of a ship (*Rud.* 1013–4; *P.Oxy.* 100) and the shipwreck (*Rud.* 69, 640; *P.Oxy.* 18–20).

In order to underscore the aspects of role-playing and farcical comedy which take place in this part of his novel, Petronius transforms the main characters (Encolpius, Giton, Eumolpus, Lichas, and Tryphaena) into type-cast figures taken from the stage, so as to enable his audience to visualize the persons involved in terms of a list of *Dramatis Personae* in a theatrical piece. Anticipating the final intrigue which Encolpius and Giton, following Eumolpus' orders, performed in order to pass unnoticed by the wrathful Lichas and Tryphaena, we notice that they choose to appear disguised as bald, branded, fugitive slaves (103.1–4; cf. 106.1: *nunc mimicis artibus petiti sumus* 'we have been attacked by means of farcical tricks'). The image they project resembles strikingly the comic figure of the fugitive slave (Pl., *Cas.* 952–3) and the actual mimic type of the bald-headed fool, *mimus calvus* or μωρὸς φαλακρός: this role was usually played by the secondary actor in a mimic troupe (*actor secundarum*).[14]

The odd couple, Lichas and Tryphaena, are represented as Encolpius' and Giton's mortal enemies for some reasons probably described in a part of the lost text (106.2, 113.2–3). Their reappearance in the plot is due to the recurrent motif of Fortune's power over the weak hero of the novel (100.3; 101.1), a topic favoured by the comic theatre, where the superiority of mere chance over the human mind and the sudden reversal of fortune provide dramatic plots with unexpected twists. Lichas is a merchant captain by profession (101.4). This figure has a long history in the theatrical tradition. He occurs in the Χαρίτιον-mime, being ridiculed by the buffoon slave (108–9 Page). Battaros, the pander, in the second mime of Herodas, accuses Thales, the merchant captain (1–6, 16–7), in a monologue before the court. The latter is supposed to have wronged the former by taking away one of his girls by force and without his consent (24–5). The points that are emphasized in Battaros' speech about Thales' character are the latter's rudeness and aggressiveness. Although one suspects that the pimp exaggerates the facts to his own benefit, in ancient literary tradition the sailor-type is always presented as rowdy and disreputable, from Homer to Choricius of Gaza.[15] Eumolpus' statements about Lichas suggest, however, quite the contrary (101.4), and Lichas himself asserts: 'I am not cruel' (*non sum crudelis*) (106.3),

[14] This grotesque figure appeared in the episode at the market-place: *et nescio quis ex cocionibus, calvus, tuberosissimae frontis* (15.4). See ch. two, n. 32.

[15] See Headlam—Knox 1922, xxxix–xl; Cunningham 1971, 81. The first impression that the heroes and the audience of the novel get of Lichas' ship is created by

but there are many instances in which his behaviour is similar to that of his antecedent and posterior literary fellows (100.4; 105.9; 106.1; 108.6–7). Only three lines have survived from Caecilius Statius' *comoedia palliata Nauclerus* ('The Ship-owner') (cf. Menander's Ναύκληρος); it is hazardous, therefore, to risk any conclusions apart from the fact that its title probably shows the existence of a ship-owner-character.

But the most interesting testimony which proves that the *gubernator* was an actual comedy-character comes from Plautus. Blepharo, the ship-owner, makes a brief appearance in *Amphi.* 1035. In *Mil. Glor.* 1176–81, Pleusicles, the *adulescens*, is instructed by Palaestrio, the slave, to disguise himself as a ship-master in order to deceive Pyrgopolynices, the *miles*, and take Philocomasium, the soldier's concubine, away from him. The costume is described in detail:

> *quom extemplo hoc erit factum, ubi intro haec abierit, ibi tu ilico*
> *facito uti venias ornatu huc ad nos nauclerico;*
> *causeam habeas ferrugineam, [et] scutulam ob oculos laneam,*
> *palliolum habeas ferrugineum (nam is colos thalassicust),*
> *id conexum in umero laevo, exfafillato bracchio,*
> *praecinctus aliqui: adsimulato quasi gubernator sies;*
>
> When this is done and after she has gone inside, then take care to come here in a ship-owner's costume; you should wear a rust-coloured hat and a woollen patch in front of your eye; you should also have a small rust-coloured cloak (for this colour is suitable to a seaman), fastened on your left shoulder and fitted with a girdle in some way, leaving the arm uncovered: pretend to be a ship's master.

The point is not that Lichas is dressed exactly like this, but that the sailor is a stock-figure in the cast of the Roman plays.

Scholars have been trying to find the model which inspired Petronius to create his enigmatic Tryphaena. Several identifications with historical or fictitious persons have been made, depending upon the character's name or her beauty (101.5) or her connection in the novel with some kind of juridical case (100.7; 106.4).[16] On the other hand,

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the sailor with the bristling beard (99.5: *barbis horrentibus nauta*), perhaps one of those rogues (108.8) who are going to be involved in the fight on board later on (108.8–9). The detail of the straggly beard in the sailor's description foretells, I believe, the ensuing violence and the kind of people Encolpius and his friends are going to confront on board ship (cf. 104.5: *furentes nautae*): see *Th.L.L.*, s.v. *barba*, I.1 (*nota plur. de uno homine valde barbato*).

[16] See Baldwin, "Petronius' Tryphaena", *Eranos* 74 (1976), 53–7; R. Verdière, "La Tryphaena du *Satyricon* est-elle Iunia Silana?", *Latomus* 15 (1961), 551–8.

she exhibits characteristics attributed to female roles in the theatre. She is as beautiful and luxurious (101.5) as any *meretrix* in a Roman Comedy or a charming *mima* in a mimic troupe; as ruthless and cruel (100.4) as the Jealous Woman in Herodas' Fifth Mime (13–8); as decisive (108.10) and active (108.7) as Bacchis in Pl., *Bacch.* 35–9 (cf. 35–108); as tender (106.2; 109.8; 110.3; 113.1) and naive (105.11; 106.1) as Philaenium in *Asin.* 537, 542, and Philematium in *Mostell.* 214 ff.; as opportunist and materialistic (114.7) as Erotium in *Men.* 192. She is the one chosen to play the role of a herald (*caduceator*) (108.12–4) who will make a truce and bring to an end the fight on board, as if she performed a part in a tragedy (108.13–109.1): waving an olive-branch, shouting in a loud and excited voice, improvising on material taken from tragedy in mock-epic verses. Nevertheless, these similarities between Tryphaena's *persona* and some female theatrical figures should not shade or restrict other possible inspirations (historical or literary) which might have influenced Petronius' conception of her character (cf., e.g., the portraits of women in Hor., *S.* 1.2). As is the case with most of the characters of this novel, Tryphaena's personality is a mixture of the literary and the real, a combination of life and literature, filtered through Petronius' exuberant imagination.

Looking at the development of the plot, we find Encolpius having boarded a ship with his lover and their new acquaintance. He meditates on the possible problems that Eumolpus' rivalry for Giton may cause, and tries (without success) to calm himself with philosophical generalisations of a Senecan kind (100.1–2; cf. Sen., *Ep. Mor.* 73.6–8). His musings are interrupted by two familiar voices which sound off-stage and create panic in the hero (100.3–4): Encolpius is presented like a character in a play who hears or sees something outside the audience's visual area, and expresses his or her distress at the disastrous consequences which may emerge from this unexpected twist in the plot.[17] When they realize that they have boarded the ship of their worst enemy, Lichas, who happens (!) to be conveying Tryphaena, another enemy of theirs, to Tarentum, as under a sentence of banishment (100.7), both Encolpius and Giton react in an exaggerated way, appropriate to cheap melodrama: Encolpius is

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[17] See, for example, Ampelisca's monologue in Pl., *Rud.* 442–57, where she sees Labrax and Charmides, whom she thought dead, approaching towards her, and comments on the inconvenience that their arrival will bring to her companion, Palaestra, and herself.

thunderstruck and exclaims against Fortune (101.1), Giton faints (101.1), and, when they recover slightly, they become formally Eumolpus' suppliants (101.2). Necessary explanations, which are not at all helpful in reconstructing the lost parts of the novel and the precise past relationship between the main characters and Lichas with Tryphaena, are given to the surprised Eumolpus (101.6), who *confusus et consilii egens iubet quemque suam sententiam promere* 'confused and at his wit's end, asks each one of them to bring forward their suggestions' (101.7).

After this exhortation, a long series of ridiculous scenarios and desperate schemes is introduced (and is overruled) by each of the three characters in order to get themselves out of this difficult situation. All of them could well be scenarios for mime-performances, since they exhibit the irrationally conceived, ridiculous trickery which can have no other effect than the amusement of the audience. It is significant to note that every suggestion has its own rejection, and that both of them, that is, the suggestion and the rejection, constitute a beginning and an end of an imaginary mime-performance. This thesis is reinforced if one notices that the verbs *finge* and *puta* occur four times at the beginning of those suggestions (101.7; 101.11; 102.11; 102.15) and induce the audience of the novel to conceive them in terms of play-acting and the stage.[18] One can easily visualize that the setting represents a quiet corner in the deck of a ship. The main characters are two runaway slaves (*fugitivi*, 101.6), Encolpius and Giton, and their protector (*custos*, 98.8), Eumolpus.

The disposition of these scenarios in the surviving text is as follows:

1. 101.7 (suggested by Eumolpus) / 101.8 (rejected by Giton).
2. 101.8 (suggested by Giton) / 101.9–11 (rejected by Eumolpus).
3. 102.1–2 (suggested by Encolpius) / 102.3–7 (rejected by Eumolpus).
4. 102.8–9 (suggested by Eumolpus) / 102.10–2 (rejected by Encolpius).
5. 102.13 (suggested by Encolpius) / 102.14–5 (rejected by Giton).
6. 102.16 (suggested by Giton) / 103.1 (rejected by Eumolpus).
7. 103.1–2 (suggested by Eumolpus) / 103.3–4 (accepted and performed).

Eumolpus' assimilation of their situation with that of Ulysses in the cave of the Cyclops (*'fingite' inquit 'nos antrum Cyclopis intrasse'* ' "imag-

[18] See Sandy 1974, 345, and the discussion of these passages in Collignon 1892, 278–9.

ine" he said "that we have entered the Cyclops' cave".') (101.7),[19] apart from being one more reference to the Homeric element in the novel, is the usual sophisticated Petronian device of role-playing.[20] This image, however, of themselves being shut inside the Cyclops' cave foretells only partly what is going to happen at the end, because, although the Cyclops-Lichas is going to be defeated eventually, as is the case in the Homeric text, he is not going to be deceived by their clever stratagems but by what he always revered: Fate and the Gods! In order to save themselves, Eumolpus and his young protégés must become the cunning king of Ithaca and his comrades, but the final general impression is more of a ridiculous caricature of Odysseus' crafty mind. Nevertheless, under the guise of a πολύτροπος ἀνὴρ they are each going to propose means of escape (*effugia*) (101.7).

It is a comic reversal of the characters' and the audience's expectations that it is the first hypothetical situation (101.7), suggested by Eumolpus[21] in a most desperate and improbable manner, that will be the actual *iter salutis* 'way to salvation' (102.13)[22] for the three friends at the end, that is, in the shipwreck. There is no need to obelize *ponimus* at 101.7 (*nisi naufragium* †*ponimus*†), for if it is taken in the sense of 'staging a play', it reinforces the argument for a theatrical interpretation of the sea-trip-scene.[23] Thus it becomes apparent

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[19] Sandy 1974, 344 notes that 'the *Odyssey* seems to have provided material for many a piece of low comedy', and refers to Aristoxenus, *apud* Ath., 1.19F (= frg. 135, ed. F. Wehrli) who 'includes Κύκλωψ τερετίζων and Ὀδυσσεὺς σολοικίζων as themes in the repertoire of the γελωτοποιοί." See also Sandy 1974, 345 and n. 3 for more Homeric play-acting in the novel.

[20] See Walsh 1970, 95. Rosenblüth 1909, 44, considers the passage as 'literarische Parodie des Mimus' of Ulysses' saga. Fedeli 1981(a), 161–74, and, especially, 1981(b), 91–117, rightly connects this phrase with the Homeric element and the Labyrinth-motif in the novel; his conclusions, however, are highly unlikely, since he seeks to find in this sea-trip 'il motivo della purificazione e dell' iniziazione dell' eroe attraverso la prova.' (p. 116). Interestingly enough R. Ferri, "Il Ciclope di Eumolpo e il Ciclope di Petronio: Sat. 100 ss.", *Materiali e Discussioni per l' analisi dei testi classici* 20–21 (1988), 311–5, regards this scene as influenced more by later Euripidean theatre (*Iphigen. Taur.*, *Helen* and, especially, the farcical *Cyclops*) than by the Homeric epic.

[21] Sandy 1974, 344 underlines Eumolpus' prominence in this series of amusing theatrical ruses and connects it with his professional association with the stage in the past. The reader must also note that Eumolpus will be responsible for the mimic scheme at Croton (117.4 ff.).

[22] One would think that Petronius was echoing deliberately by his expressions *iter salutis* (102.13) and *hoc ergo remedio* (102.13), the Publilian apophthegm *Nil turpe ducas pro salutis remedio* (*Sent.* 423 Friedrich).

[23] See Watt 1986, 181. This rare sense of *ponere* occurs in a letter of Pollio in Cic., *Fam.* 10.32.3 and in Pers., *S.* 5.3.

that it is Eumolpus' intention to *stage* a shipwreck, in other words to create a *mimicum naufragium*. This instruction, introduced in the manner of a stage-direction, becomes a hint for the audience of the novel to perceive the forthcoming events as theatrical δρώμενα.

The second plot is a more elaborate one (101.8). The *custos*, in order to save the *fugitivi*, should persuade the *gubernator* to run the boat into some harbour. He would pay the helmsman well and use as an excuse that his brother is seasick and about to die. Giton provides even the necessary directions for the actor's expression (without any doubt, taken from his own repertoire; see, e.g., 9.2–3): the *custos* should look confused, shedding plenty of tears (101.8) so that the helmsman will be moved and indulge his demands. The funny turn in the plot, if it was ever performed on stage, would be either that the captain would demand to see the sick person and so, actually, recognize him, or that everyone would want to give a helping hand to the poor sick man, even if he had his head covered, and, thus, would realize the fake.

Encolpius in a moment of despair decides to risk everything. He and Giton will slip down a rope into a boat and leave the rest to luck (102.1–2). According to a 'moralising' Petronian *sententia*, composed in the manner of those by Publilius Syrus, the mimographer,[24] Eumolpus is left out of this risky plan (102.2). The plan would fail because they would be discovered by the sailor guarding the small boat (102.5). A farcical fight would then follow, during which the sailor would have to be killed or thrown out by force (102.5). Eumolpus retreats before such a perspective, preferring dangers which offer a chance of safety (102.6–7) to those wholly dependent upon chance (102.3). The irony, of course, is that it is chance which will save them at the end.

The next plot comes from history. Plutarch (*Caes.* 49.1–2) gives a clear description of Cleopatra's device to meet Julius Caesar secretly by wrapping herself inside a mattress. Eumolpus has the similar idea of rolling Encolpius and Giton inside two leather covers, tying them up and hiding them among his clothes as luggage (102.8).[25] The next

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[24] Cf. P. Syrus, 84 Friedrich (*Boni est viri etiam in morte nulli imponere*; cf. *imponi* at 104.2).

[25] H. Fuchs, "Verderbnisse im Petrontext", in *Studien zur Textgeschichte und Textkritik*, ed. H. Dahlmann, R. Merkelbach (Cologne: 1959) 75, n. 23, parallels this passage with Aristoph., *Ach.* 926–8, where Dicaeopolis attempts to pack an informer in a litter so as not to be seen.

stage of the trick would be to start crying that his slaves have escaped by throwing themselves in the sea. Finally, at the first harbour he would carry off the two wrapped-up bodies as baggage (102.9). This trick is an excellent example of how the theatre of the mime may have employed and exploited to the point of ridicule material from history or mythology. A male Cleopatra in a Petronian mime-performance, once being wrapped up, would start having stomach-problems (102.10), would sneeze or snore (102.10), would complain about the inconvenient situation he got himself into (102.12)! The mimic spirit is clear in this comic distortion of actual facts, as well as in the distribution of roles and the reversal of the role-playing: Eumolpus, who plays Apollodorus, Cleopatra's slave, will hide Encolpius and Giton, who together play Cleopatra, in order, not to *meet* Lichas, who plays Caesar, but to *avoid* him!

Encolpius' next suggestion, apart from mentioning the basic ingredient for the final trick (that is, the *atramentum*, 'ink', 102.13), introduces a major element in the theatrical tradition of comic devices: the disguise. It can be traced back to Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousai*, but the Roman stage does not lack references either. The motif occurs in the native Italian drama and in both the *fabula togata* and *fabula palliata*. Two fragments (*Kalendae Martiae*, 53–5 Frassinetti; *Macci Gemini*, 61–4 Frassinetti) and one title (*Maccus Virgo*) from the surviving *fabulae Atellanae* written by L. Pomponius, and one more line (*Epistula*, 120 Daviault) from a *fabula togata* written by Afranius, give hints for the existence of the motif, which was exploited in a more elaborate way in Plautus' *Casina*, 875–936. In all of these passages, a man is dressed, for some reason, as a woman (sometimes a bride) and even tries to soften his voice in an effeminate manner. The trick is meant to fail so that funnier situations will amuse the audience (*Macci Gemini*; *Casina*).[26] In the *Sat.* the proposed role is that of Aethiopian slaves (102.13) and will be achieved by dyeing themselves with ink. To this extraordinary solution, which nevertheless might well be used in an actual stage-performance, Giton sarcastically adds the possibilities of

[26] Other examples of disguise in Plautus are: Pleusicles in a captain's costume (*Mil.* 1281–330); a swindler in a large hat and appropriate costume for his purpose (*Trinum.* 843–60); Simia in a military costume (*Pseud.* 911 ff.); Sagaristio and his daughter have been dressed suitably in order to pass off as Persian messenger and Persian girl, respectively: he wears a tiara (*Per.* 463) and she small boots (464); Collybiscus pretends to be a foreigner, so he appears dressed like one (*Poen.* 577, 620). Cf. Preston 1915, 267.

circumcision, piercing the ears, and painting the face with chalk; thus they will appear as Jews, Arabs and Gauls (102.14), respectively.[27] What follows is an exaggerated distortion of the disguise-motif: in a long series of three hypothetical conditions (102.15) and six rhetorical questions (102.15), Giton uses the theatrical motif to the point of ridiculing its function and actual essence. His train of thought is supported by a mock-philosophical axiom (102.14). The comic irony is very subtle: Giton disputes the exaggerated role-playing with which he is so well acquainted. On the other hand, there may be hidden in this accusation a sarcastic Petronian criticism of actual theatrical performances, where similar devices were employed.

Melodrama comes next. In a crazy mood, Giton suggests enveloping their heads in their clothes and plunging into the deep (102.16). Sentimental and inappropriate in the mind of a Roman (*ut vos tam turpi exitu vitam finiatis* 'so that you may end your lives in such a disgraceful manner') (103.1), this ending reminds one of the sudden and unfinished endings of a mime-performance when the plot has come to a deadlock (cf. the violent exit of the mimic actors mentioned in Cic., *Cael.* 65).

In the final scheme, which they will eventually follow, two elements, in particular, are highly likely to have been adapted by Petronius from the theatre of the mime: the shaving of the head and the branding of the forehead. I have already mentioned that baldness was a usual characteristic of a mime, adding more of the ridiculous to the expressions of the face and the body. Petronius brings this feature to an extreme, since Eumolpus' *mercennarius*, who happens (!) to be a barber, shaves not only the head but also the eyebrows of both of them (*radat utriusque non solum capita sed etiam supercilia*) (103.1). It is important for the audience of the novel to remember this, since for almost the rest of the Lichas-scene, Encolpius and Giton will look like bald-headed and branded mime-actors. Branding as a punishment on stage is found in a Greek Petronius.[28] In Herodas' Fifth Mime, Γάστρων, the slave, has made love to Ἀμφυταίη, ignoring his mistress Βίτιννα. When she finds it out, he defends himself

[27] In Plautus' *Poen.* Hanno is a Carthaginian foreigner and the playwright takes care to make him appear as such (975, 981).

[28] A comparison of the similar manner in which this motif is used by Herodas and Petronius can be found in C.P. Jones, "Stigma: Tatooing and branding in Graeco-Roman Antiquity", *Journal of Roman Studies* 77 (1987), 139–40. See, also, Headlam—Knox 1922, ad Herod., 5.67.

innocently. Βίτιννα, however, threatens to punish her slave by branding his forehead.[29]

Eumolpus will do precisely the same thing in an exaggerated manner: he will cover both their foreheads with enormous letters (*ingentibus litteris*) (103.4) and will use ink so freely (*liberali manu*) (103.4) that the final image of the *fugitivi* (103.4) will end up a caricature, rather than a convincing imitation of a real slave-punishment. When later on they will be betrayed (104.5) by Hesus, one of the passengers who chanced to see them performing their scheme (103.5), Lichas will order the culprits to be flogged forty times (*quadragenas utrique plagas imponi*) (105.4). In a more cruel manner, Βίτιννα decides that the proper punishment for her unfaithful slave is a thousand blows on his back and a thousand on his belly (32–4). Two more directions are provided by the text of Petronius, which help us to perceive this trick not as an attempt by the author to represent in his novel an incident of real life, but as his conscious desire to produce a spectacle derived from a theatrical source. The trick is characterized as *fallacia* (103.3), a word coming directly from the schemes of the cunning slave in the Roman comedies[30] and in the mimes (Cic., *Rab.* 35). Later on, Lichas himself refers to it as *mimicae artes* (106.1), thus defining its origin more specifically. This must have been the way Petronius conceived it (a mixture of mime and comedy themes), and as such it must have been regarded by the contemporary audience of the novel.

Dreams as a narrative device to warn characters and readers of future events were frequent in ancient literature. The Greek romances abound in them.[31] Comic theatre has comparatively less instances to offer. In the surviving twenty and a half Plautine comedies Demipho's dream in *Merc.* 225–70, and Daemones' dream in *Rud.* 593–612, are the only examples of the motif.[32] Herodas' Eighth Mime (Ἐνύπνιον) is an interesting addition to the list of literary genres that employed this motif, because it proves that the dream can be used by the author as a means to defend himself against hostile literary criticism.[33] In

[29] See Herod., 5.27–8, 77–9, and cf. *Sat.* 103.2: *sequar ego frontes notans inscriptione sollerti*, and 103.4: *et notum fugitivorum epigramma per totam faciem liberali manu duxit.*

[30] See Lodge 1924, s.v. *fallacia*; Ter., *Andr.* 197; *Haut.* 513.

[31] Ach. Tat., 1.3.4–5, 2.23.5; Heliod., 2.16.1; 4.14.2; 5.22.1–3; 8.11.2; 10.1–3. See Bartsch 1989, 80–108.

[32] See Preston 1915, 267; P.J. Enk, *Plauti Mercator* I (Lugduni: 1932) 7–21; Fraenkel 1960, 187–93, 425–6.

[33] See Headlam-Knox 1922, lii–liii; Cunningham 1971, 193–5.

the surviving *Satyrica* this motif occurs four times (17.7; 104.1–2; 128.6; fr. 30),[34] but the dream which marks Lichas' and Tryphaena's reappearance in the novel (104.1 and 104.2) is special from many points of view.

It is a 'double dream', in the sense that two persons dreamt separately the same dream. It does not use any allegorical images and does not need interpretation. The message is clear and is delivered in direct speech which makes it more dramatic and livelier. Petronius, the alleged Epicurean, treats it in a non-Epicurean way,[35] since what the dream conveys is not at all 'nonsense' (*ludibrium*) (104.3), but an actual fact which will be revealed in the end. It is directly connected with another recurrent theme in the *Satyrica* (especially, in the *Cena Trimalchionis*): superstition. This feature is expected to appear in mime which tended to represent faithfully the ordinary way people lived and expressed themselves.[36] Cicero (*De Orat.* 2.251) testifies to the existence of the superstitious person as a stock mimic target. In Lichas' case, however, the particular superstition of not allowing the cutting of hair or finger-nails during a sea-trip (104.5–105.1)[37] is in a clever way connected with the farcical theatre through the motif of mimic baldness. Thus what was reported by Ovid (*Fasti*, 3.327 ff.) and Artemidorus as an actual superstition becomes a narrative device employed by Petronius in order to advance the plot of his mimic episode.[38]

When the storm takes place later on, *Lichas, trepidans ad me supinas porrigit manus et 'tu' inquit 'Encolpi, succurre periclitantibus, id est vestem illam divinam sistrumque redde navigio'* 'Lichas, trembling, stretched out his hands in supplication and said "Encolpius, help us in our peril; I mean, return the holy robe and the rattle to the ship".' (114.4–5). Presumably Encolpius has purloined the robe and rattle of Isis from the ship's prow. This particular superstition has a direct parallel in the

[34] On these passages see H.S.J. Musurillo, "Dream symbolism in Petronius Frag. 30", *Classical Philology* 53 (1958), 108–10, and Kragelund 1989, 436–50.

[35] See Kragelund 1989, 450. The question whether Petronius was a true Epicurean or not is still a controversial subject: see Courtney 1991, 14.

[36] See Sophr., 120 Kaibel; Herod., 1.35, 6.35, 8 and Rosenblüth 1909, 42–3.

[37] C. Bonner, "The Omen in Herodotus VI.107", *Classical Philology* 1 (1906), 237 compares this superstition with Artemid., *Oneir.* 1.22 (πλέουσι δὲ διαρρήδην ναυάγιον σημαίνει [sc. τὸ ξυρεῖσθαι τὴν κεφαλήν]) and refers to J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* I (London: 1900) 378 for more parallels.

[38] See Fröhlke, "Petron 104.5: Ein antiker Sakralbrauch?", *Rheinisches Museum* 123 (1980), 358.

Χαρίτιον-mime: the buffoon slave suggests stealing an offering of the goddess when they were about to depart, but Χαρίτιον strongly disagrees with him (48–55 Page).

The problem that the introduction of dreams and superstitions creates in the episode of Lichas is a difficult one. We have seen that the author himself characterized as *mimicis artibus* (106.1) the schemes suggested and undertaken by the three friends, thus making explicit the formative genre from which he derived material for his novel. Dreams and superstitions, however, occur also in many non-theatrical texts. Moreover, even if such alternative sources of inspiration did not exist, one could argue that Petronius is describing everyday life with its superstitions, and not farcical events with a mimic spirit. The context can be a valuable guide. In this part of the novel, which actually started earlier on (92) with the mimic interlude inside the inn, Petronius is constantly drawing material from the theatre and, especially, from the mime. It is important to bear in mind this continuity of narrative spirit, because it clarifies the way events should be interpreted by the audience: one is inclined to conceive almost everything that is said and done as theatrical speech and gestures, and assume that, even if Petronius drew his material from, for example, satire (which is a non-theatrical genre), he none the less incorporates it in a long series of theatrical events and exploits it in a way appropriate to the theatre. Thus the literary ingredient is reformed according to the context. More specifically, both Lichas' and Tryphaena's parallel dreams, and Lichas' superstitions, although they might not, necessarily, have a theatrical source, are, nevertheless, used as elements in a theatrical plot, and, as a consequence of this, they present a predominantly theatrical appearance.

The sacrilege demands expurgation and Lichas decides that forty stripes should be inflicted on both the stigmatized slaves (105.4). Encolpius endures three blows with Spartan heroism (*Spartana nobilitate*) (105.5), but just one is enough for Giton to start shouting and imploring for forgiveness. Consequently the ruse fails completely, since both of them are recognized eventually: Giton by Tryphaena and her maids because of his familiar voice (105.6)[39] and Encolpius by Lichas because of the size of his genitals (105.9):

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[39] Gagliardi 1980, 107, n. 46, remarks that the repetition of Giton's name by the maids and their constant exhortations to stop the boy's punishment, function as a kind of theatrical chorus of the scene.

> *Lichas, qui me optime noverat, tamquam et ipse vocem audisset, accurrit et nec manus nec faciem meam consideravit, sed continuo ad inguina mea luminibus deflexis movit officiosam manum et 'salve' inquit 'Encolpi'.*
> Lichas, who knew me intimately, hurried up to us, as if he also had heard my voice; he did not take any notice of either my hands or my face, but immediately turned his eyes downwards at my testicles, moved his importunate hand and said 'Hello, Encolpius'.

This is a good example of how epic parody reaches the extreme crudeness of what could easily have been the material for a mimic performance. Odysseus' old nurse Eurycleia recognized him, despite his age and disguise, by a scar on his leg (*Od.* τ 467 ff.). This incident is presented in the way a mimic text would have parodied an instant of the Homeric saga.[40] In this farcical scene staged by Petronius, Lichas, who is the equivalent of the nurse, recognizes Encolpius, a new Odysseus, not by a similar scar or wound but by his *membrum virile*! The narrator's subtle, but ironical, comment (105.10) reinforces effectively this vulgarity, and sounds like an amusing aside to an audience who watches a Homeric travesty. Mime allowed obscenity and Petronius' eccentric literary intentions would certainly find a suitable vehicle in this genre in order to shock and amuse his audience.

The consequence of the attempt to deceive Lichas is the trial-scene which immediately follows (106–107). An impromptu mock-court seems to be set up consisting of Encolpius and Giton as the accused, Eumolpus as their defence-counsel, and Lichas as both the accuser and the judge![41] The whole scene is perfectly structured with pairs of arguments for and against the homosexual couple:

i. accusation (*superstitiosa oratio*) (106.3).
ii. defence (*deprecatio <supplicii>*) (107.1–6).
iii. accusation (*iniqua declamatio*) (107.7–11).
iv. defence (107.12–14).
v. accusation (107.15).

The rhetorical or juridical aspect of these speeches is not directly relevant to the purpose of this chapter. What is interesting, however, is the actual trial-scene itself as a popular mime-motif: Battaros' speech

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[40] See Rosenblüth 1909, 44; Gagliardi 1980, 107 who refers to Knoke 1908, 12 ff.

[41] Kehoe 1984, 104–5 rightly claims that 'Lichas is explicitly described as a wronged husband (106.2). The rage of Lichas, here said to be apparent from his facial expression (*turbato . . . vultu*), reminds us of the similar rage of the wronged husband described by Choricius (*Ap. m.* 55).'

in the second mime of Herodas is the monologue of a pimp defending himself in a court. The monologue is a formal juridical speech with all the typical expressions and rhetorical figures; even a secondary character, a clerk (Γραμματεύς), is introduced reading aloud the Law of assault (46–8); further, the men of the jury (1, 49) and the person who timed the speech (42–3) are also addressed. Apuleius (*Met.* 10.2–12) describes a highly dramatic court-scene which could originate from a mimic plot.[42] Similarly, Choricius of Gaza (*Apol. Mimorum* 30) speaks of a court-scene in the adultery-mime, where the husband takes the two adulterers to court and the judge threatens them with punishment (cf. Livy, 3.44.9; Philo, *De Legat.* 359). One is tempted to assume that there was a court-scene before the crucifixion-scene in the well-known *Laureolus*-mime.[43] In Petronius the ridiculous and pathetic situation itself argues for the mimic source of the author's inspiration.[44] There is nothing to remind the audience of the seriousness with which the authors of the Greek romances treated similar instances in their novels. It is remarkable, however, that even in the Greek romances, where the situations are supposed to be regarded as tragic and full of real pathos, the trial scene is conceived as a theatrical spectacle. The speech of the priest who was defending Clitophon in court against Thersander, is full of verbal and gesticulatory expressions, equivalent to those of Aristophanes' comedy (Achil. Tat., 8.9.1). Similarly, Chariton identifies the court where Chaereas is being judged for Callirhoe's hypothetical murder as a theatre where all different feelings were present simultaneously (Charit., 5.8.1–2).

The outcome of the trial follows upon Encolpius' dishevelled appearance when a wet sponge wiped away his inky 'mask' and revealed everything. The forthcoming fracas is a slightly different version of the mimic fight that took place in the inn (95.4–9) between Eumolpus and some of the lodgers (*pars cenulae*) (95.1), and aims only at the pleasure of the audience derived from slapstick and pseudo-violent scenes. The two opposite troops are:

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[42] See H. Wiemken, *Der griechische Mimus. Dokumente zur Geschichte des antiken Volkstheaters* (Bremen: 1972) 139–46; P. Steinmetz, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Literatur des zweiten Jahrhunderts nach Christi Geburt* (Wiesbaden: 1982) 367–72.

[43] Testimonia on this mime are: Josephus, 19.1.13; Suet., *Calig.* 57; Juv., 8.187; Tertul., *Adversus Valentianos* 14; Mart., *De Spect.* 7; see Gehman 1922, 99–100; L. Herrmann, "Laureolus", in *Hommages à Henry Bardon, Collection Latomus* 187, ed. M. Renard—P. Laurens (Bruxelles: 1985) 225–34.

[44] See, also, fragments VIII and XIIII, which might refer to a trial-scene, now lost.

Eumolpus		Lichas
mercennarius comes	vs.	Tryphaena
unus alterque infirmissimus vector		*familia* Tryphaenae
Encolpius		*clamor ancillarum*

The weapons to be used are the iron tools (*ferramenta*) of Eumolpus' hired servant (*mercennarius*) (108.8) and the bare fists of Tryphaena's slaves (108.8); yet, the vocabulary is reminiscent of a battle-scene (108.8–9)![45] Similar instances of pretended cruelty occur both in comedy[46] and mime (Herod., 5.25; 5.30; 5.33–4; Choricius, *Apol. Mimorum* 78: παίζουσι πόλεμον ἐνίοτε μῖμοι). The theatrical structure of this fight is apparent even from the fact that the disposition of the enemies is symmetrically organized by Tryphaena (108.7–8), so that the whole thing resembles a spectacle in the amphitheatre, where the two factions came from opposite directions. Giton's threat to castrate himself (108.10) is the action which will bring an end to the fight. This initiative is a brilliant distortion of a melodramatic sacrifice with no moral intention whatsoever: Giton does not say 'Stop or I will cut my throat' but 'Stop or I will cut off my genitals!', something that would please neither Tryphaena (108.10) nor the sailors (105.7). The castration-motif in the novel should not be seen under the light of any psychoanalytical theory[47] but, as the text itself suggests, as a mock-tragedy (*audacius tamen ille tragoediam implebat* 'but he played his tragic role more boldly') (108.11; cf. *Sat.* 140.6; Cic., *De Orat.* 1.219, 2.205; Quint., 6.1.36), performed excellently by Giton who, after all, is used to this kind of behaviour (80.4; 94.12; 94.15).

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[45] Note, also, that Eumolpus' only wound, during his fierce fight with the lodgers at the inn (95.4–9) was a scratch in his eyebrow (98.7); the result of Encolpius' comic battle (*proelium*) (136.12) with Oenothea's geese (136.4–5) is a slight wound on the knee (136.7). Amusing incongruities of a similar kind can be observed in the comedies: in Plautus' *Aulularia*, Euclio kills Staphyla's cock with a stick because it was scratching about at the place where the pot of gold was buried (465–72). The event is described in an epic manner: *optrunco* (469), *facta est pugna* (472). Cf. ch. five, n. 21.

[46] See the brawl between Sosias and Mercury (Pl., *Amph.* 292–396); between Libanus, Leonidas and a merchant (*Asin.* 407–90); between Olympio and Chalinus (*Cas.* 404–9); between Menaechmus I, Messenio and the slaves (*Men.* 997–1018); Cyamus and Stratophanes (*Truc.* 627–9); between Gnatho, Thraso, Simalio, Donax, Syriscus, Chremes, and Thais (Ter., *Eun.* 771–816). On pretended violence as a source of amusement in Plautine comedies see Castellani 1988, 65–6; on hitting as a basic type of clowning in Aristophanes see MacDowell 1988, 7.

[47] See Sullivan 1963, 81 ('Castration anxiety may be understood as the fear of punishment for forbidden looking.' This does not make sense here.); Sullivan 1968(a), 248.

Encolpius' comic attempt to hang himself (94.8) as well as the false death (*mimica mors*) which so frequently occurs in the Greek romances,[48] must be seen in the same light of theatrical attempts at suicide or deaths: in Plautus' *Cistellaria* (639–45), Alcesimarchus is holding a knife and intends to kill himself, but wonders which side to strike first. His beloved Selenium intervenes and stops him. With the help of either a drug (the false death of a trained dog in Plut., *De Soll. Anim.* 973E–974A; the pretended death of the old husband in the Oxyrhynchus mime—The Μοιχεύτρια 42–3 Page) or of a specially retractable dagger (Achil. Tat., 3.20.7) (an equivalent of Giton's blunt razor), important for the plot,[49] characters could be killed and resurrected, thus raising the audience's expectation and agony.

As in the mimes to which Choricius refers (*Apol. Mimorum* 30), after the trial of the adulterous couple everything ends up in laughter and songs, so in the *Satyrica*, after Lichas and Tryphaena had taken a formal oath not to pursue Encolpius and Giton any longer (109.2–3),[50] the fight ends with kisses, songs and joy (109.4–6). What precedes the storm-scene is a peaceful description of a spectacular Roman *venatio*,[51] transferred to the sea (109.5–7); the deck of the ship becomes an amphitheatre now: fish (109.6) and sea-birds (109.7) are caught in an idyllic atmosphere (109.7), Eumolpus recites a brief elegy on hair (*capillorum elegidarion*, 109.9)[52] and the story of the 'Widow of Ephesus' (111–112),[53] while Tryphaena takes care to restore Giton's

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[48] See Xen. Ephes., 3.5; Achil. Tat., 3.20, 5.7; Iambl., 4. On the topic of 'Scheintod' in the ancient novel see Heinze 1899, 496–7; F. Wehrli, "Einheit und Vorgeschichte der griechisch-römischen Romanliteratur", *Museum Helveticum* 22 (1965), 142–8.

[49] On the function of the 'rasoir inoffensif' in the theatre and the *Satyrica* see Collignon 1892, 278. Sandy 1974, 343, n. 31 refers to P. Berol. 13927, 'which is a list of mime titles and props', as evidence for mimic quality in the Lichas-scene, because 'it includes among the stage-properties a representation of a river, ship's tackle, and barber's equipment.' The text of (and comments on) the papyrus can be found in Wiemken 1972, 191–7. On mimic dances which ended with mimic deaths see Mark I. Davies, "The suicide of Ajax: a bronze Etruscan statuette from the Käppeli collection", *Antike Kunst* 14 (1971), 152.

[50] Cf. the comic contract of the parasite between Diabolus, and Cleareta & Philaenium (Pl., *Asin.* 751–807). On the parody of the juridical terms which Eumolpus uses for the reconciliation see Cèbe 1966, 214.

[51] See Balsdon 1969, 302 ff; Ville 1981, passim.

[52] Corbett 1970, 92 views Eumolpus' improvisations against the shaven and stigmatized young men within the mimic tradition of the baldness-motif.

[53] The bibliography on the Milesian Tale of the Widow of Ephesus is enormous: see G. Huber, *Das Motiv der "Witwe von Ephesus" in lateinischen Texten der Antike und des Mittelalters* (Tübingen: 1990). A theatrical interpretation of the scene has been first attempted by Rosenblüth 1909, 46 who compared the portrait of the Ephesian matron

and Encolpius' beauty with a blonde wig and false eyebrows (110.1–2), a second theatrical mask. All these small details create purposefully the contrast with the horrible Vergilian storm that will cause Lichas'—and nearly Tryphaena's (114.7)—death (114.6). On the other hand, this same storm gives the opportunity to the two lovers to express their love-feelings in a superbly melodramatic and sentimental dialogue (114.8–11),[54] as if it were the script of a *mimicum naufragium* performed on stage. Notice that the direct speech of the text contains the necessary rhetorical passion and tragic gesticulations of a dramatic performance, while the indirect speech serves as the stage-directions for that performance:

> *applicitus cum clamore flevi et 'hoc' inquam 'a diis meruimus, ut nos sola morte coniungerent. sed non crudelis fortuna concedit. ecce iam ratem fluctus evertet, ecce iam amplexus amantium iratum dividet mare. igitur, si vere Encolpion dilexisti, da oscula, dum licet, ultimum hoc gaudium fatis properantibus rape'. haec ut ego dixi, Giton vestem deposuit, meaque tunica contectus exeruit ad osculum caput. et ne sic cohaerentes malignior fluctus distraheret, utrumque zona circumvenienti praecinxit et 'si nihil aliud, certe diutius' inquit 'iuncta nos mors feret, vel si voluerit <mare> misericors ad idem litus expellere, aut praeteriens aliquis tralaticia humanitate lapidabit, aut quod ultimum est iratis etiam fluctibus, imprudens harena componet.'*
>
> Encolpius (embracing Giton and crying aloud): "Did we deserve this from the gods, that they should unite us only in death? But ruthless Fate does not allow even that. Behold, the waves will turn the boat upside down even now; behold, the wrathful sea will now sunder the lovers' embrace". (To Giton) "Well, if you ever really loved Encolpius, kiss him while you may, and seize this last joy from the fate that hastens upon us".
>
> (Giton takes his clothes off, covers himself with Encolpius' shirt, puts on his belt and ties it tightly round himself and his lover.)
>
> Giton: "Whatever happens, at least for quite a time a death in harness will carry us along, or if the pitiful sea wishes to cast us upon the same shore, either someone may pass by and put stones over us out of ordinary human kindness, or the final work of even the angry waves will be that the sand, without knowing it, will cover us".

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with the passionate women in the mimes (κυρία in the Μοιχεύτρια-mime, Μητρίχη in Herodas 1). Gagliardi 1980, 111 notes the following mimic characteristics: 'il soggetto piccante, . . . la parodia virgiliana, . . . gli stessi personaggi riuniti in un terzetto caratteristico (vedova—mezzana—amante).' A valuable reading of the anecdote through the language of theatre and role-playing should be consulted in Slater 1990(b), 108–11.

[54] See Walsh 1970, 102; Gill 1973, 179. Such melodramatic scenes can be found in the comedies: the lovers Philaenium and Argyrippus exchange promises of eternal love and say that they want to die together in each other's embrace (Pl., *Asin.* 610–5), as Encolpius and Giton do.

Folk-tales, Comedy or the Greek romances are possible sources of inspiration for the figure of the *piscatores* (114.14),[55] who come to the rescue. The irony in Petronius' characterization of these people lies in the fact that, although they provide food and a place to sleep for the survivors of the shipwreck (115.6), their intentions were not so hospitable from the beginning (114.14: *ad praedam rapiendam . . . mutaverunt crudelitatem in auxilium*). It is at this point that Encolpius sees Lichas' body floating on the surface of the sea and, as does Daemones more briefly while watching Palaestra's and Ampelisca's struggles with the waves (Pl., *Rud.* 154–5), philosophizes on the weak nature of human beings in an extremely long monologue (115.9–19), whose moral aspects are often misunderstood and overstressed by Petronian scholars.[56] The pretentiousness of the rhetorical expressions in the soliloquy, as well as the exaggerated gestures (115.12) in Encolpius' behaviour, argue for an ironical interpretation of the message that this monologue conveys to the audience of the novel.

The above analysis of the chapters 100–115 of the *Satyrica* made clear that the events which took place during the sea-trip on board Lichas' ship, were presented by the author of the novel as a whole sequence of theatre-themes, although their ultimate source of inspiration may lie on ordinary situations from everyday life. The literary patterning of the scene and the sophisticated evocations of epic and ideal romance should not be undervalued, but the most important element which pervades this episode is the mimic spirit of ridicule and amusement.

II. *Dives Fugitivus: Sat. 116.1–125.4*

The episode at Croton is the last series of events we possess from the surviving *Satyrica*, though not necessarily the last part of the novel in its original form. The action takes place in a town which no longer existed at the suggested time of the novel's composition.[57] The plot

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[55] In Roman Comedy, *Rud.* 290–330; Pompon., *Piscatores* 118–20; in the mimes, Laber., *Piscator* 71; in the Greek romances, Xenophon, 5.1; Heliod., 5.18; *Hist. Apoll.* 12; in popular story-telling see *Dictys* in W.H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexicon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie* I, 1020.

[56] See Slater 1990(b), 112–3; B.E. Perry, *The Ancient Romances* (Berkeley—Los Angeles: 1967) 200; Arrowsmith 1972, 327.

[57] See D. Schmid, *Der Erbschleicher in der Antiken Satire* (Tübingen: 1951) 26–7; Walsh 1970, 104 and n. 1.

is focused, mainly, on two themes: legacy-hunting and Encolpius' impotence. His unsuccessful relationship with the nymphomaniac Circe (126.1–130.8) and his painful experience with the witch-like priestesses Proselenos and Oenothea (131.1–139.5) are manifestations of the latter theme. Philomela's prostitution of her children (140.1–11) is a brief example of the former theme and shows the kind of gifts the Crotonians offered Eumolpus in order to win his favour and a share in his vast legacy (124.4). The purpose of this section is to establish the theatrical (mimic) backcloth of the story, in front of which the ensuing action is going to take place.

The introductory monologue (116.4–9) of a farm-bailiff provides his audience (namely, Encolpius, Giton, Eumolpus and Corax, but, also, the auditor or reader of the novel) with the necessary information about the status of legacy-hunting that has been established at Croton:[58] celibacy and childlessness (116.8), dinners and shows (116.7) are the only interest of the populace; the traditional Roman values of literary study, eloquence, frugality and pure life are not worth anything (116.6). The image of crows and of corpses devoured by them, as Eumolpus' body will be offered to be eaten by his heirs (141.2), seems to give a pseudo-moralistic ending to this soliloquy (116.9). What strikes Eumolpus is not the moral decline of Croton (116.5–6), but the prominence the Crotonians give to wealth and social life (116.7–8); that is the significant detail which will lead him to his theatrical solution of the *Dives Fugitivus*, or the 'Fugitive Millionaire'-mime.[59] Despite Encolpius' hesitations (117.2), he immediately expresses his wish to have the appropriate theatrical equipment

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[58] On this strange description of Croton see Schmid 1951, 27–9; Fedeli, "Petronio: Crotone o il mondo alla rovescia", *Aufidus* 1 (1987), 8 ff. and n. 8. On the shrewd practice of legacy-hunting in Rome see Hor., *Sat.* 2.5.23 ff.; Pers., 6.41–2; Juv., 3.129, 4.19, 12.93 ff.; Mart., *Ep.* 4.56; Schmid 1951; V.A. Tracy, "Aut captantur aut captant", *Latomus* 39 (1980), 399–402. Fedeli, "Encolpio—Polieno", *Materiali e Discussioni per l' analisi dei testi classici* 20–21 (1988), 12, notes that the farm-bailiff functions in the narrative not only as a person who provides pieces of information but also as the 'Prologue' in the farce that Eumolpus and his troupe are going to perform at Croton.

[59] For a discussion of this mime in relation to the Petronian episode see Collignon 1892, 279, and Rosenblüth 1909, 47–8. Both of them cite Cic., *Phil.* 2.66 and Sen., *Ep.* 114.6 as evidence for the popularity of the subject in the theatre of the mimes. O. Skutsch, "Quotations in Cicero", *Rivista di Cultura Classica et Medioevale* 2 (1960), 197–8, speculates that the Ciceronian expression *modo egens, repente dives* must have been not only part of a *senarius* of the mimic script but also the actual title of the mime. A treatment of the same theme seems to be implied in the title of a *fabula Atellana*: L. Pomponius, *Heres Petitor* 49–50. Frassinetti 1967, 103, prefers the vaguer

which would lend veracity to the scheme he has in mind (117.2). Thus Eumolpus is presented as a comic poet who yearns to fulfil his ideas, but the lack of means puts a halt to his plans. The technical terms (*largior scaena*, *vestis humanior*, *instrumentum lautius*, 117.2) taken from the stage[60] should not be seen as evidence to support the theory of an actual representation on stage of what has happened at Croton. Their significance lies in the fact that Eumolpus visualizes the behaviour, actions and appearance of himself and his friends, as a theatrical role-playing based on the infallible combination of deception (the figure of the childless and rich old man) and reality (the incident of the shipwreck), with no other purpose than the lucrative pleasures they are going to enjoy when they reach Croton (117.2), and the amusement the audience of the novel will derive from an episode structured in the manner of a mimic farce. Likewise, Eumolpus' lengthy poem on the *Bellum Civile* effectively reflects the situation of moral degeneracy at Croton, but also parodies poetical compositions on this hackneyed subject and helps to alleviate the tiredness of the journey.[61]

Eumolpus' scenario for a mime-piece (*'quid ergo' inquit Eumolpus 'cessamus mimum componere?'*, 117.4) is a typical one.[62] Eumolpus pretends to be a wretched millionaire who left his home because he could not bear the untimely death of his only son (117.6). His poor looks should be explained by the fact that he had just survived a shipwreck (117.7) (which is true; see 114.1–4, 115.1–5). Not everything in this scenario is strictly necessary for the ensuing plot. Eumolpus could easily have said that he did not have children at all and that the purpose of his trip, which ended in a shipwreck, was business. The additional details, however, give a melodramatic tone to the

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interpretation 'candidato' than *petitor hereditatis*. See, however, F. Leo, "Die römische Poesie in der sullanischen Zeit", *Hermes* 49 (1914), 174, n. 7, who interprets *heres petitor* as *petitor hereditatis*.

[60] On *instrumentum* = *apparatus*, *ornatus scaenicus* see Fedeli 1988, 10, who refers to Festus *ap*. Paul., 45.19L (*choragium instrumentum scaenarum*) and to Seneca, *Dial.* 6.10.1: *instrumentis scaena adornatur*. Cf. Plin., *Ep.* 7.17.9: *latior scena et corona diffusior*; Suet., *Caes.* 37: *instrumentum triumphorum*.

[61] See Walsh 1968, 210–1, and R. Beck, "Eumolpus *poeta*, Eumolpus *fabulator*: a study of characterization in the *Satyricon*", *Phoenix* 33 (1979), 248 who interprets Eumolpus' poem from a farcical point of view. For a full survey of the interpretations of the *Bellum Civile* see Soverini 1985, 1754–9, 1766–71.

[62] Sandy 1974, 345, refers to Reich 1903, 319, n. 4 and notes that 'the ruse formulated by Eumolpus at 117.2–10 in such richly theatrical and mimic metaphors is specified in *Rhet. ad Her.* 4.50.63 as a trick of the mimic stage.' Thus Eumolpus becomes a *mimologus, qui mimos docet* (see Bonaria 1965, 161).

past life of that unfortunate millionaire who thus becomes a perfect bait for the legacy-hunters (*heredipetae*) at Croton. It is interesting to note, also, that Eumolpus takes care to construct his scenario according to the clichés one would expect to find at a mime-performance (i.e. the *mimica mors* of a non-existing son, the *mimicum naufragium* of more than two million sesterces, the sudden change of fortune, expressed in the contrast rich/poor, happy/wretched).

The element of role-playing is clear.[63] Eumolpus and his friends are already typecast theatrical figures: Encolpius and Giton, after having their heads shaved (103.3; do they still wear the blond wig and false eyebrows of 110.1–5?), are still posing as *mimi calvi* or as *servi* (117.6);[64] Eumolpus is *actually* an old man (83.7; 117.2) who plays the part of the *dominus gregis* (117.6).[65] The theatrical dimension of the new personalities which the friends acquire before entering Croton, is reinforced by their comparison with *legitimi gladiatores* (117.5), figures of the *spectacula* in the amphitheatre.[66] Corax, the *mercennarius Eumolpi* (94.12; 99.6; 103.1; 117.11), is acting (117.12) like the buffoon slave of the Χαρίτιον-mime who used to complain and fart all the time (4, 24, 44–5 Page; cf. Arist., *Frogs* 8). Moreover, certain tricks are employed in order to stress Eumolpus' pretended bad health (117.9–10). Forgetfulness and frequent cough[67] occur in satirical contexts (Hor., *S.* 2.5.106–7) as symptoms of the imminent death of the rich old man whom the legacy-hunter must flatter, but Petronius' comment in Eumolpus' case (*ne quid scaenae deesset*, 117.10) means that the general conception of the schemes in question is a theatrical and not a satirical one.

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[63] Collignon 1892, 276 interprets the verb *condiscimus* (117.6) as a technical theatrical term in the sense 'Ils apprenent leurs rôles'. Cf., also, Schmid 1951, 34 ff.

[64] Choric., *Apol. Mimorum* 26: σχηματίσηται μῖμος . . . δοῦλον. George, "Petroniana", *Classical Quarterly* 17 (1967), 132, following Fraenkel, suggests to emend the participle *ficti* (117.6), which is in plural and refers to Encolpius, Giton and Corax, to *fictum*, in order to refer to the singular accusative *dominum* ('the master of our own making'). Cf., however, Müller's (^{3}1983) *app. ad hunc loc.*: '*ficti* ne deleamus neve *fictum* scribamus numerus obstat'.

[65] Fedeli 1987, 16 notes the double function the word *dominus* has for the narrative: 'nella finzione del "mendacium" Eumolpo sarà "dominus gregis", "inventor" e primo attore, ma nella realtà dovrà apparire come il vero e proprio *padrone* di quegli schiavi improvvisati.' Eumolpus was responsible for the theatrical scenes at 94.15 and 106.1, as well.

[66] See their gladiatorial oath at 117.5, and cf. Schmid 1951, 34–5 and 177, n. 16.

[67] In Pl., *Asin.* 794–5 a false cough, done in such an exaggerated manner that the tongue is extended out of the mouth, is supposed to be a sexual insinuation made by a courtesan towards a man, and reminds one of Eumolpus' false cough in front of the Crotonians.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ADVENTURES AT CROTON

I. *Polyaenon Circe amat: Sat. 126.1–130.8*

During Encolpius' love-affairs at Croton the audience of the novel should constantly bear in mind the mimic scheme devised by Eumolpus and followed by Corax, Giton, and Encolpius (117.4–10); the author himself provides us with references to theatrical apparatus (117.2; 117.10), an explicit mention of the mimic theatre (117.4), and a detailed exposition of a mimic plot, according to which each one of the characters should adopt a particular role: Eumolpus becomes a childless old millionaire (117.6 ff.) and the others pretend to be his slaves (117.6). Thus the theatre of the mime functions as the 'backcloth' in front of which all the legacy-hunting adventures, structured farcically, will take place. However, it is strange that for the following fourteen chapters the author does not make even a single reference to this theme (the only hint is made *after* the end of the love-affair and the magic rites at 139.5), but draws his audience's attention towards another 'leit-motif' in the novel, Encolpius' personal erotic experiences and the problems that his impotence causes.

This series of events is perhaps the most elaborately constructed part of the surviving novel, because it includes direct and indirect references to such a wide range of literary genres which are so densely connected to one another that it is impossible to evaluate their function in the text if they are examined separately.[1] A mere enumeration, therefore, of theatrical references in this part of the novel would not show the significance farcical theatre has for this episode, especially since, in comparison with the rest of the novel, few theatrical parallels can be seen in Encolpius' romance with Circe, whereas epic and satire constantly pervade this part of the text. This, however,

[1] The best discussion of the dense literary frame of the Circe-episode is M. Pacchieni, "Nota Petroniana. L' Episodio di Circe e di Polieno (capp. 126–131; 134)", *Bollettino di Studi Latini* 6 (1976), 79–90. See, also, Walsh 1970, 106–7; D. Blickman, "The Romance of Encolpius and Circe", *Petronian Society Newsletter* 17.1&2 (1987), 6–9.

does not necessarily exclude theatre from the list of many literary genres that may have worked as sources of inspiration for Petronius, when he was composing what seems to be the final adventure in his novel. Petronius' debt to the theatre, as far as the Croton episode is concerned, should be sought not only in its particular details (characters, language, and role-playing in this staged love-affair), but also—and mainly—in the general spirit of the events. The purpose of this section is to display both these details and the mimic spirit that permeate this part of the novel, as well as the preceding chapters.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Encolpius/Polyaenus Chrysis Circe

Encolpius' personal adventures at Croton begin somewhat abruptly (126.1) with a speech addressed to him by a woman who, as is stated in the margin of codex l, is *Chrysis ancilla Circes*, speaking *ad Polyaenum*, that is Encolpius who has a Homeric pseudonym. Why did Encolpius change his name to Polyaenus and what are the consequences that this change bears to his theatrical *persona*? Expanding on the observations made by Barchiesi on the name *Polyaenus*, Fedeli's remarks on the particular time that Encolpius assumed his pseudonym, that is, when he agreed to figure as a slave in order to deceive the Crotonians, are especially significant for the theatrical interpretation of the episode.[2] He demonstrates that the name *Polyaenus* serves as an actor's name, since it refers to a person (Encolpius) who has changed his actual identity and has adopted the *persona* of a slave. The same name occurs in Aristaenetus, *Ep.* 1.4 as a lover's name (cf. Encolpius' love affair with Circe) and belongs also to an Epicurean philosopher from Lampsacus, one of the chief direct disciples of Epicurus (see *OCD*, s.v.; for this Epicurean connection cf. 128.5: *vera voluptas*). Finally, the Homeric meaning of the adjective πολύαινος = 'much-praised' (see *Schol. Om.* on *Iliad* Λ 430, p. 206 Erbse) makes Encolpius a temptation to Circe's lust and a good example of the comic Odysseus, as he was parodied on the farcical stage.

Due to the fragmentary state of the text we do not know if there had been a previous brief first encounter between Circe and Polyaenus but, as far as we can tell from Chrysis' monologue, there is no need

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[2] See A. Barchiesi, "Il nome di Lica e la poetica dei nomi in Petronio", *Materiali e Discussioni per l' analisi dei testi classici* 12 (1984), 171–3, and Fedeli 1988, 9–32.

to suppose this, because all the necessary information about Circe and her lust towards men of a lower social status is included there. In fact, when Chrysis makes her entry and delivers her memorized monologue, she functions like the introductory Prologue of the ensuing farce. Polyaenus, ignorant of the situation, is already on stage, Circe is waiting nearby to be taken to him (in a theatrical representation of the scene she would have waited behind the *siparium*), and Chrysis enters on stage to prepare this meeting. It has been rightly suggested that 'perhaps the most perfectly conventional comic type in the *Satyricon* is Chrysis, the go-between or intermediary in the Circe-Polyaenos episode.'[3] Many elements in the personality of the maid justify this statement: her type-cast character, her name, her function in the novel, and her stylized speech. The type of the clever *ancilla* is a stock-character in Roman Comedy, usually playing a significant part in the development of the plot.[4] In connection with the theatre, a woman with the name *Chrysis* occurs in Menander's Σαμία, as the concubine of Δημέας, the *senex*, in Plautus' *Pseud.* as a barmaid, in Terence's *And.* as a prostitute, and in a *fabula palliata* by Trabea (*ex inc. fab.* 1.5). Following the tradition of the common Plautine technique of 'speaking names', Circe's servant-girl is named Chrysis, because her task is primarily connected with money (χρυσίον), since she has come there in order to buy, on behalf of her mistress, what Encolpius sells.[5]

The most important theatrical element in her behaviour is the role of go-between or *conciliatrix*; there are striking similarities between Chrysis' function in the romance of her mistress with Encolpius

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[3] Preston 1915, 268.

[4] In Plautus: *Amph.* (Bromia), *Cas.* (Pardalisca), *Cist.* (Halisca), *Men.* (Ancilla), *Mil.* (Milphidippa), *Most.* (Scapha), *Per.* (Sophoclidisca), *Poen.* (Ancilla), *Sti.* (Crocotium and Stephanium), *Truc.* (Astaphium). In Terence: *And.* (Mysis), *Heaut.* (Phrygia), *Eun.* (Pythias and Dorias). Cf. Currie 1989, 331 and n. 38; Quartilla's maid and her brief monologue at 16.3–4 serves as a kind of theatrical *prologus* for the ensuing events in that part of the novel. Useful comments on the literary tradition of the *ancilla* are made by A.S. Hollis, *Ovid. Ars Amatoria. Book I* (Oxford: 1977) 99–100.

[5] *vendisque amplexus* (126.1); *nisi quod formam prostituis ut vendas?* (126.2); *sive ergo nobis vendis quod peto, mercator paratus est* (126.4). See Schmeling 1969(b), 6 argues that 'the use of such a high proportion (77%) of Greek names in a work of literature written by a Roman could mean only one thing: comedy'. Against such a view see S. Priuli, *Ascyltus. Note di onomastica petroniana. Collection Latomus* 140 (Bruxelles: 1975) 22–7. See, also, Rosenblüth 1909, 38 who connects the way Petronius uses the names of his characters to the 'speaking' names of mimes: Μαλακος, an effeminate slave in the Μοιχεύτρια-mime, Βάτταρος, the aggressive pimp in Herodas 2, and Κέρδων, the greedy shoe-maker in Herodas 7.

/ Polyaenus and Milphidippa's behaviour in the pretended love-affair between Acroteleutium and Pyrgopolynices in Plautus' *Mil. Glor.* Both of them stress the emotional situation of their mistresses (Pl., *Mil.* 998 and *Sat.* 126.5); both of them are ready to pay for the man's sexual services (Pl., *Mil.* 1061 and *Sat.* 126.4); both of them are misunderstood by the two men to want them for themselves, not for their mistresses (Pl., *Mil.* 1038–40 and *Sat.* 126.8). Finally, the phrase *procedentibus deinde longius iocis* 'then, as the sports were prolonged for a longer time' (126.12) suggests the kind of puns and flirting gestures that were exchanged between Astaphium, the *ancilla*, and Diniarchus, the *adulescens*, in Pl., *Trucul.* 115–38, where the young man sports with the maid of Phronesium, the attractive courtesan, by whose charms he is enchanted.

The function of the maid as a procuress was not confined to Roman comedy.[6] One can also trace its features in the theatre of the mime.[7] The go-between Γυλλὶς in Herod., 1.50–66 (Προκυκλὶς ἢ μαστροπὸς) tries, in vain, to convince Μητρίχη to indulge the desires of someone called Γρύλλος, using as an argument the fact that from the moment he saw Μητρίχη at a festival, he was heart-broken and suffered from insomnia (cf. *Sat.* 126.5: *accendis desiderium aestuantis*). These similarities do not establish that Petronius had Γυλλίς, or Milphidippa, or another comic maid in mind as the model for his Chrysis,[8] but they show clearly that the author of the novel was working within the theatrical tradition in delineating her character.

Another element of Chrysis' theatrical *persona* is the incongruity in the two styles of speech she employs when she addresses Polyaenus. When she first approaches him and proposes to buy his sexual services for her mistress (126.1–7), her style is not at all appropriate to a slave. Petronius underlines this rhetorical dimension of her speech by pointing out the impact it had made upon Polyaenus (*oratione blandissima plenus*) (126.8). When Polyaenus misunderstands her

[6] The title *Conciliatrix* as one of Atta's comedies (Atta, *com.* 7) seems to suggest that the motif was not limited only to the *fabula palliata*, but was exploited also by the writers of the *fabula togata*. See Daviault 1981, 256.

[7] On the character of the bawd see Headlam-Knox 1922, xxxii–xxxv. Cunningham 1971, 58 refers to Aristokles *apud* Ath., 621c [(ὁ δὲ μαγῳδὸς καλούμενος) ὑποκρινόμενος ποτὲ μὲν γυναῖκας καὶ μοιχοὺς καὶ μαστροπους, . . .] and to Sophr., 69 Kock.

[8] There are non-theatrical references, as well, to the type of the *conciliatrix ancilla*, which could have had a certain influence on Petronius' Chrysis as 'go-between'. See Lucil., 291 Warmington; Cic., *De Nat. Deor.* 1.27.77; Ps. Acr., on Hor., *S.* 1.2.130.

intentions and asks her in the same elaborate rhetorical style (*schema*, 126.8), if the one who loves him is none other than herself and not her mistress, Chrysis reacts with long laughter and gives a brief picture of her sexual preferences (126.9–10) in a style strikingly similar to that used by the freedmen in Trimalchio's dinner-party.[9] This unexpected change of tone is rather puzzling, but the shift from the sophisticated to the more colloquial style should not be explained only by the assumption that Petronius was interested in describing in a realistic way how a maid would speak. The pretence in the style of language that Chrysis chooses to use should be seen as part of her whole role-playing and her pretence to be a *matrona*.[10] When she addresses Polyaenus on behalf of her mistress, she wants to create an impression of a person of a high social status. But when Polyaenus addresses her personally, and not as an intermediary in the affairs of her mistress, then the true social status of a maid is revealed through the language she uses, although her specific sexual tastes have an extraordinary peculiarity (126.10). This stylistic use of language by persons totally inappropriate to it is a frequent Petronian technique: cf. Giton's speeches (9.4–5; 80.3–4; 94.10–11; 128.7) and the introductory monologue of the *vilicus* at 116.4–9. The target that Petronius aims at by presenting this 'acting' is to underline the 'mimic unreality' of the scene and to create comic situations out of it.

Chrysis' taste in men (126.9–10) may function as more than a mere comic reversal of the relationship between master and slave, according to the general reversal of things which takes place at Croton:

> *'nolo' inquit 'tibi tam valde placeas. ego adhuc servo numquam succubui, nec hoc dii sinant, ut amplexus meos in crucem mittam. viderint matronae, quae flagellorum vestigia osculantur; ego etiam si ancilla sum, nunquam tamen nisi in equestribus sedeo.'*
> "I do not want you" she said "to adore yourself so much. I have never lain down under a slave yet, and may the gods forbid that I should throw my arms round someone condemned for crucifixion. Let married women see to that, for they are the ones who kiss the scars of flogging; I may be only a servant-girl, but I never sit on top of anyone, unless he is a knight".

[9] Examples of the two different styles that Chrysis employs in her speech are in George 1966, 344.

[10] See Fedeli 1987, 17–8 and n. 22; cf. *Sat.* 126.11 and 126.12 where Chrysis walks through a laurel grove and lifts her tunic in the manner of a lady who does not want to get it dirty by letting it crawl on the ground.

Her words recall the statement of a mime-actress in public around 54 B.C. The whole incident is vividly described by Pseudacron (on Hor., *S.* 1.10.76–7):

> *Arbuscula quaedam mima fuit, quae cum sibilo vulgi eiceretur e theatro, placeret autem paucis equitibus, dixit 'contenta sum his prudentibus, quamvis pauci videantur esse fautores'. aliter: Arbuscula quaedam mima fuit, quae placebat bonis potius quam plurimis. haec aliquando explosa a populo dixit hoc 'equitum Romanorum plausu contenta sum';*
> There was some mime-actress called Arbuscula; when she was thrown out of the theatre with hisses from the people, although a few knights liked her, she said: "I am content with these prudent men, although they seem to be only a small number of fans." Another version: There was some mime-actress called Arbuscula; she was prized more by the worthy people than by a great number of them. When once she was driven off the stage by the clapping of the people, she said the following: "I am content with the applause of the Roman knights;"

Could it be that Petronius was indirectly referring to this incident through Chrysis' words? If so, the fact that a mime-actress was the main person involved in the incident adds to the theatricality of Chrysis' personality.

In the same way that Acroteleutium, the *meretrix*, plays the role of the enamoured woman in Plautus' *Miles*, both Circe and Polyaenus treat their affair, in both sexual intercourse and sexual failure, as role-playing: Encolpius perceives his function in the relationship as a lover in the terms of a role (see the elegiacs at 126.18), and Circe's rhetorical questions about her physical appearance (128.1) place her sexuality in the theatrical context of an actress who performed (or failed to perform) her role in the appropriate manner.[11]

These remarks underline the visual dimension of the unsuccessful sexual intercourse. An audience would have certainly found it an amusing spectacle to watch a beautiful woman (Circe) on stage, a *mima*, after she failed to arouse her lover, making faces in front of a mirror, thus becoming ugly and making a fool of herself (128.4: *omnes vultus temptavit, quos solet inter amantes risus fingere*). It is worth adding that Chrysis, as well as her mistress, hints in her speech at Encolpius' role-playing in a subtle and clever way. The verb *fateris* (*nam quod servum te et humilem fateris*, 126.5), instead of a more affirmative *es*, and

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[11] See Slater 1990(b), 124–5. Schmeling 1971, 341–2 interprets wrongly Circe's rhetorical questions (128.1) and Encolpius' musing to himself (128.5) as examples of the *exclusus amator* motif in the novel.

the mention of an actor disgraced by appearing on stage (*aut histrio scaenae ostentatione traductus*, 126.6) as one of Circe's sexual preferences,[12] could be taken as further insinuations about Encolpius' 'acting'. One can, therefore, conclude that this brief scene between Chrysis and Polyaenus is the narrative equivalent of a conversation between an *ancilla conciliatrix* and an *adulescens amans* in a Roman comedy!

The scenery changes now into a *locus amoenus*.[13] Everything seems to be carefully staged. Circe must have been waiting all this time until Polyaenus, convinced by Chrysis, agreed to indulge her desires; finally, she is brought out *e latebris* (126.13),[14] and her beauty leaves the hero speechless. An ἔκφρασις follows (126.14–17) in which there is a detailed description of Circe's beauty. Her description is certainly meant to evoke similar depictions of other heroines in the Greek Romances.[15] Thus the contrast between the chaste maiden of the Romances and the nymphomaniac matron of Croton is sharp and entertaining. The Roman stage, however, does not lack the use of this motif. The young Agorastocles has eyes only for the beautiful Adelphasium whom he regards as comparable to Venus and as a reason for him to be considered an immortal god (Pl., *Poen.* 275–8). When, in Plautus' *Trucul.*, the attractive courtesan, Phronesium, comes on stage and asks the young man, Diniarchus, to join her inside, he flatters her by comparing her beauty to the scents and bloom of spring (353–4). Likewise, the impact which Erotium, the *meretrix*, makes on the eyes of Menaechmus 1, when she comes out of her house (Pl., *Men.* 179–81), is the theatrical equivalent of Encolpius' description of Circe.

Despite the strong connection between Circe's character and the heroine of the Greek Romance, the figure of the beautiful Homeric

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[12] Chrysis mentions (126.5–6) four categories of men that Circe prefers as sexual partners: the slave, the gladiator, the muleteer, the actor. See Slater 1990(b), 123: 'What Circe cannot know is that Encolpius is at least three of these four: an actor playing a slave in a troupe sworn to follow Eumolpus like true gladiators (*tamquam legitimi gladiatores*, 117.5).'

[13] See *platanona* (126.12); note the *daphnona* (126.12) through which Chrysis leads Polyaenus to Circe. Of course, this idyllic place is being employed ironically here, since the romance that is going to follow will fail completely. See E. Keuls, "Une cible de la satire: Le *locus amoenus*", *Les Études Classiques* 42 (1974), 265–6.

[14] Both the appearance of Circe coming out of her hiding-place (126.13) and her departure into the temple of Venus (128.4) seem to me to be carefully staged theatrical entrance and exit, respectively.

[15] See Ach. Tat., 1.4.3, 1.19.1; Long., 1.17.3; Xen. Eph., 1.2.6; Heliod., 1.2.5; 3.4.2–6; Charit., 2.2.2; and Pacchieni 1976, 80.

witch[16] and that of an Ovidian woman in love,[17] what was pointed out repeatedly from the first time Chrysis referred to her mistress, was not Circe's beauty but her lust towards slaves and other low-class men (126.5–7). The union of a free woman and a slave is well documented in ancient life and literature.[18] This motif has been repeatedly exploited by the comic stage. Herodas' Fifth Mime and the Oxyrhynchus mime of the Μοιχεύτρια[19] depict similar situations between noble ladies and slaves: the pairs are Βίτιννα and the slave Γάστρων in Herodas 5 and the κυρία and the slave Αἴσωπος in the Μοιχεύτρια-mime (cf. Laber., *Comp.* 30 ff.; Aristok. *apud* Ath., 621c).

Circe's affair with the slave Polyaenus is meant to be seen as a comic equivalent of such theatrical representations of everyday life, and not as an ill-fated erotic adventure portrayed in a realistic manner. References to the theatre are constantly made in relation to Circe's sexual preferences: the arena (an area where all sorts of spectacles took place) and the actor who is exhibited on stage (*histrio scaenae ostentatione traductus*) (126.6) are among the causes that inflame Circe's lust. Moreover, when Encolpius fails to perform in his second sexual encounter with Circe, she becomes furious and gives orders for his punishment, similar to those that the Μοιχεύτρια gives for the punishment of the two slave-lovers who are unfaithful to her.[20] All the women in these texts show a tremendous jealousy towards the rival lovers of their slave partners (type of *furens femina*): Circe

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[16] See Chrysis' remarks at 129.10: '*solent' inquit 'haec fieri, et praecipue in hac civitate, in qua mulieres etiam lunam deducunt*. . .'. Cf. M. Coccia, "Circe maga 'dentata' (Petron. 126–140)", *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 41 (1982), 85–90.

[17] For the Greek Romances see above, n. 15. For the epic connection see Collignon 1892, 318 and n. 1. For the Ovidian poem see Walsh 1970, 42 and nn. 1–2. Anderson 1982, 67 draws attention to the sexually insatiable women of Hellenistic literature, such as Arsake (in Heliodorus) or Melite (in Achilles Tatius), Stratonice or Semiramis (in the 'Ninus Romance').

[18] See Arist., *Thesm.* 491–2; Xen. Eph., 2.5.1–6; Petr., 45.7–8; Juv., 6.278–9; Mart., 12.58; Quintil., 5.11.34; Tac., *Ann.* 12.53. For more references see Sullivan 1968(a), 121, n. 1; on the love-affair of women with their slaves as a special satiric target see Rudd 1986, 193–205.

[19] Grenfell—Hunt 1903, 40 ff; Page 1942, 350–61. An extant theatrical analysis of the Μοιχεύτρια is in S. Sudhaus, "Der Mimus von Oxyrhynchus", *Hermes* 41 (1906), 247–77; Rostrup 1915, 88–107. The connection between Petronius' Circe and the mime-heroines was made for the first time by Rosenblüth 1909, 51–2. Cf., also, Headlam-Knox 1922, xlv–xlvi; Sullivan 1963, 76; Kehoe 1984, 89.

[20] See Μοιχεύτρια 1–8 Page. Cf. also *Sat.* 132.2 (*et me iubet catomizari*) and Herod., 3.3: τοῦτον κατ' ὤμου δεῖρον; cf. Βίτιννα's orders to punish Γάστρων at Herod., 5.18; 20–5; 31–4; 47–9.

towards Giton, 128.1; 129.8 / Βίτιννα towards 'Αμφυταίη, 1–3 / the κυρία towards 'Απολλ(ωνία), 20–3 Page. These details contribute to and reinforce the characterization of the Circe-Polyaenus love-affair as a caricature taken from the stage.[21] Thus the meeting between Circe and Polyaenus could have been a farcical theatrical piece, ridiculing the Homeric saga in the common vulgar manner of the mimes: again, only three actors / *personae* are mentioned (Polyaenus, Chrysis, Circe); the action of this *exodium* would be conveniently divided in two brief scenes: Polyaenus and Chrysis (126.1–12) / Polyaenus, Circe, and (probably) Chrysis (126.13–128.6).

When Chrysis re-enters the scene, her actions are still in accordance with her role-playing as *ancilla conciliatrix*: she brings a letter from Circe (129.3) and expects an answer back (129.11). Use of letters occurs in the Greek Romances and 'as a literary exercise practised in the schools of rhetoric'.[22] In the theatrical tradition this theme occurs frequently. The letter-motif abounds in the titles of Middle and New Comedy writers: Εὐθυκλῆς, Ἄσωτοι ἢ Ἐπιστολή; Ἄλεξις, Μάχων, Τιμοκλῆς, Ἐπιστολή. The Roman stage too does not lack references: among the titles of the *fabula palliata* we find an *Epistula* by Caecilius and a *Tabellaria* by Novius (cf. Turpilius, 196–7 Ribbeck^3), while Afranius' *Epistula* seems to suggest that the same motif was exploited by the *fabula togata*, although of the nineteen surviving fragments none gives any indication about the kind of letter of the title. Plautus has used letters several times either as true messages (the first love-letter of our surviving Latin literature is in *Pseud.* 40–73; cf. *Mil.*, 130) or as devices to achieve a trick (*Bacch.* 728–47, 996–1035; *Curc.* 429–36; *Pers.* 501–27; *Pseud.* 997–1014; cf. *Epid.* 251–3; *Pseud.* 716; *Trin.* 774–7).[23] Circe's and Polyaenus' letters may have been composed within the tradition of theatrical letters,[24] because of the

[21] Bieber 1961, 49, figs. 204–5, gives two illustrations of the Odysseus-Circe theme from the Kabeiric vases on which both the Homeric hero and the beautiful daughter of the Sun are portrayed in a ridiculous manner like exaggerated caricatures of a farce. Rosenblüth 1909, 44, suggests that the Circe-Polyaenus love-affair is part of the mimic parody of the Odysseus-saga in the whole novel.

[22] Walsh 1970, 106 and n. 3. Cf. the letter of Chaereas to Callirhoe in Charit., 4.4.7–10 and see the discussion of this and other passages in Blickman 1987, 8–9; cf. Pacchieni 1976, 79, n. 7.

[23] A useful account of the stylistic features of these letters is in G. Monaco, "L' epistola nel teatro antico", *Dioniso* 39 (1965), 335 ff.

[24] As far as I know, the only scholar who has argued strongly for the influence of the Plautine letters on Petronius is Gagliardi, "Petronio e Plauto (in margine a *Satyr.* 130.1–6)", *Materiali e Discussioni per l' analisi dei testi classici* 6 (1981), 189–92.

thematic and verbal similarities between the texts.[25] There are, however, in the letters of Petronius' text original elements which make Encolpius' brief correspondence with Circe slightly different from its Plautine equivalent: they are in prose; they do not form part of a trick; these letters are not necessarily actual love-letters, but either a threatening letter with a great deal of irony and sarcasm in it[26] or excuses and apologies in order to achieve permission for a second chance in love. One may conclude that Petronius has neither followed strictly only one of the literary genres mentioned above nor intended solely a parody of them, but that he has combined different elements from all of them in order to create his own variation on the theme, suitable to the particular context.

II. *Impotentia scaenam desiderat: Sat. 131.1–139.5*

The first 'act' of the mimic love-affair between Encolpius / Polyaenus and Circe had come to an end as day was giving place to night (130.8) and the audience of the novel was left in anticipation of the outcome of the narrator's relationship. The purpose of this section is to show that the climactic second scene of this event is structured in the same farcical tradition of sexual mimic bufoonery as was the first one.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Scaena Prima (131.1–7): Encolpius Chrysis Proselenos.
Scaena Secunda (131.8–132.5): Encolpius Circe Chrysis Proselenos.
Scaena Tertia (132.6–133.2): Encolpius Giton.

Rosenblüth 1909, 53 notes in a vague manner that the sexual innuendos which are hidden in both letters are derived from the mimes, since that genre could adjust its literary style, and make it either vulgar or sophisticated, according to the demands of the plot they had to perform each time.

[25] A list of verbal parallels between Petronius' text and the Latin theatrical texts is conveniently provided by Gagliardi 1980, 125, n. 34 and 1981, 190 ff. For parallels of the expression *apud se non esse* (*Sat.* 129.11) see Pacchieni 1976, 88, n. 84. One should add in her list Herod., 5.27 (ΓΑ: ἄνθρωπος εἰμ', ἥμαρτον) and Menand., fr. 432 (ἄνθρωπος ὢν ἥμαρτον. οὐ θαυμαστέον) as parallels to *Sat.* 130.1 (*fateor me, domina, saepe peccasse; nam et homo sum et adhuc iuvenis*).

[26] *an tuis pedibus perveneris domum* (129.5); *narrabo tibi, adulescens, paralysin cave* (129.6); *vale, si potes* (129.9); *convicium* (129.10). On the sarcasm hidden in the sexual innuendos of these phrases see Verdière, "Jeux de mots chez Pétrone", *Giornale Italiano di Filologia* 20 (1967), 309–12; Soverini 1978, 258–63.

Scaena Quarta (133.2–134.6): Encolpius Proselenos.
Scaena Quinta (134.7–136.3): Encolpius Proselenos Oenothea.
Scaena Sexta (136.4–10): Encolpius and three geese.
Scaena Septima (136.11–138.4): Encolpius Oenothea Proselenos.

The setting of the first incident is again the idyllic grove of plane-trees, only this time it is loaded with many unpleasant memories (131.1). Apart from Chrysis, a new *persona* appears on stage (131.2). At first sight the impression the narrator gets of her character is of a harmless old woman (*aniculam*, 131.2). However, once she opens her mouth (131.3) and practises an improvised spell (131.4), Encolpius realizes that he has to deal with a sorceress who has probably been employed by Circe or Chrysis in order to restore his virility. The name of this ancient witch is Proselenos, or 'Before-the-Moon' (132.5), and together with the formidable figure of her colleague Oenothea, or 'Goddess-of-Wine' (134.8), she sets the scene for the metaphysical part of the surviving novel in which her repeated attempts to practise techniques of witchcraft will fail farcically.

Witchcraft was frequently exploited in both Greek and Latin literature;[27] thus the precise source of inspiration for Petronius appears to be impossible to determine, especially since the dense literary background of Vergilian and Ovidian references is distorted by a risible treatment of the witchcraft-motif. But the ridicule of magic rites which is achieved through the constant failure of Encolpius' attempts to have an erection affirms that Petronius modelled this scene on mimic *exodia*, where popular superstitions would probably have been exploited in the same subversive way.

Theocritus, in his second *Idyll* (Φαρμακεύτρια), describes the magic incantations that Simaetha performs with the help of her maid Thestylis in order to bring back her unfaithful lover Delphis. The *scholia* mention that τὴν δὲ Θεστυλίδα ὁ Θεόκριτος ἀπειροκάλως ἐκ τῶν Σώφρονος μετήνεγκε μίμων 'Theocritus tastelessly transferred the character of Thestylis from the mimes of Sophron', and, in connection with the main subject of the *Idyll*, they add that τὴν δὲ τῶν φαρμάκων ὑπόθεσιν ἐκ τῶν Σώφρονος μίμων μεταφέρει 'he transfers the subject of the enchanted potions from the mimes of Sophron'. It is generally assumed that the mime referred to here is Sophron's

[27] A.-M. Tupet, *La magie dans la poésie latine. I. Des origines à la fin du règne d' Auguste* (Les Belles Lettres, Paris: 1976) 107–64, 223–417.

Ταὶ γυναῖκες αἳ τὰν θεόν φαντι ἐξελᾶν,[28] but Gow rightly argues that Theocritus 'may have borrowed some hints from Sophron; it is unlikely that the debt goes much beyond that.'[29] Although both the title and the plot of Sophron's mime remain open to speculation, one can reasonably surmise that magic rites were somehow presented on the mimic stage.

Another fragment of a mime attributed to Sophron and dated to the first century A.D. corroborates this theory, since it describes a magic ceremony in honour of Hecate. The fragment does not seem to belong to the mime by Sophron mentioned earlier, and exhibits specific striking similarities with Oenothea's magic techniques.

> A female magician and her assistant are performing an occult ceremony designed to liberate a group of persons (probably women) from illness or distress inflicted by Hecate. The scene is an inner room, of which the doors are closed, to be opened only when all is ready for the climax of the ceremony. The sorceress commands her patients to set down a table... immediately. Then they must take salt in their hands... and laurel about their ears... Thus equipped they are to sit beside the hearth; which here, as often, serves for an altar. There follow preparations for the sacrifice of a dog. The magician bids her assistant give her a sword... A dog is brought to her. Asphalt, a torch and incense are held ready for the act of lustration or purification which must accompany the sacrifice. The climax is now at hand. The doors are opened wide, letting the moonlight in. The patients are exhorted to keep their eyes fixed on the door. The torch is extinguished. Auspicious silence is demanded, and the invocation of—or imprecation against—Hecate begins.[30]

Likewise, Oenothea, the Priapic priestess, with the assistance of her fellow-witch Proselenos and her patient Encolpius follow another procedure, although a mock-ritual one, aimed at the restoration of the man's virility.

A serious magical scene or text, however, could equally well have been the starting point for the imagination of Petronius, who would then have undermined his model for comic effects. Once the hilarious mode in which Petronius presents Encolpius' adventures with the two witches is established, then not only Proselenos' quickly

[28] On this mime see Rosenblüth 1909, 43; Olivieri 1930, 175–80; R. Arena, "Ταὶ γυναῖκες αἳ τὰν θεόν φαντι ἐξελᾶν", *Parola del Passato* 30 (1975), 217–9; Tupet 1976, 144–53.

[29] Gow 1952, 35.

[30] Page 1942, 328–9.

improvised magic (131.4), but also Oenothea's seemingly authoritative ceremonies (135.3–6; 137.10–12; 138.1–2) should be regarded as imaginative recipes, composed precisely in order to fail, rather than faithful representations of Roman magic techniques which might be genuine enough to be classified among our *testimonia* for such practices.[31]

The second encounter between Circe and Encolpius has the same bucolic atmosphere (131.9) as the first (126.12), and is accompanied by similarly flattering erotic poems (126.18; 131.8). A series of theatrical movements takes place; their dramatic function is to give the appropriate tone of sensuality to the atmosphere. Still retaining her sexually innocent mask, Circe blushes at the sight of Encolpius, orders them to be left alone, and starts her sensual games: . . . *secundum invitantem consedi, ramum super oculos meos posuit, et quasi pariete interiecto audacior facta* . . . ' . . . I sat next to her, as she asked me to; she placed a branch over my eyes and became bolder, as if a wall had come between us . . . ' (131.10). Her speech has not lost the sarcastic tones of her letter (131.10; cf. 129.5–7), but Encolpius feels confident enough, at least for the time being, to challenge her boldness and respond in an even more provocative way (*'rogas' inquam ego 'potius quam temptas?'*, 131.11). The sight of a couple's love-meeting on stage would have been quite an agreeable scene in the plot of a licentious mime (cf. the alleged love-scenes in the adultery mimes), especially if the male partner fails once more to satisfy his woman and thus cause her outraged reaction.

It seems that Encolpius, even after his temporary treatment by Proselenos, cannot have an erection (if that is the meaning of the obscure *manifestis . . . contumeliis*, 132.2). The reason for this sexual contradiction between his meetings with Proselenos and with Circe should be sought in the dramatic effect that a second sexual failure has in the amused eyes of an imaginative audience.[32] The narrator keeps mocking himself and presents his sexual experiences as if his

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[31] For recipes, found in magic papyri, concerning how to get an erection when you want to, see *PMG* VII.185 and *PDM* lxi.58–62 in H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in translation, including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago & London: 1986) 120 and 287–8, respectively.

[32] Anderson 1982, 67 and 150, n. 2 argues that the Greek romance should not be forgotten as possible source of inspiration for the scene of Encolpius' sexual failures with Circe in the garden, since also in Longus there are such scenes of sexual failure.

impotence were the subject of a mimic sketch[33] which would be titillating and comic enough to provide a form of low-class entertainment with its unexpected turns and its violent ending. This time there is no mercy for Encolpius[34] who receives a humiliating thrashing from Circe's whole household (*cubicularios*, 132.2; *omnes quasillarias familiaeque sordidissimam partem*, 132.3) and, moreover, thinks that he deserves it (132.4). The mimic fracas is completed with the battering of Chrysis and the ejection of Proselenos (132.5), both of them regarded as equally responsible for the wrong done to their mistress.

The amusingly shocking conversation between Encolpius and his penis (132.7–11), which should not be regarded as an original touch,[35] is framed within specific role-playing (132.7: *contingere languorem simulavi*), and forms a kind of relieving reaction on Encolpius' part (132.7: *quod solum igitur salvo pudore poteram, . . . totum ignem furoris in eam converti*); he resorts both to deeds (an impulse towards mimic castration, 132.8.1–7) and to words (132.8.8–9; 132.9–10) in order to take revenge. The fact that Petronius portrays Encolpius expressing his anger aloud in a soliloquy and waiting absurdly for an apology from his *membrum virile* (*'quid dicis'*, 132.9; *'rogo te, mihi . . . redde'*, 132.10), as if it were a person who would justify his failure (132.10), is an indication of the farcical interpretation of the scene. Moreover, the crudity in which famous Vergilian quotations (*Aen.* 6.469 and 9.436, *Ecl.* 5.16 / 132.11) are exploited for vulgar purposes during this ridiculous conversational monologue (Encolpius' penis becomes the shade of Dido in its answer at 132.11) is surely in the same tradition of the coarse mimic spirit of literary parody with its obscene adaptations of well-known texts.

Feelings of guilt at his immodest discourse vex poor Encolpius who suddenly changes and surprisingly becomes a modest and respectable citizen (132.12; cf. his similar reaction of shock at the obscene context of Quartilla's indecent proposals, 25.3). A list of references to similar situations in literary texts relieves his consciousness of mental suffering (132.13), but both the equation of himself with Ulysses

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33 See Sen., *Ep.* 94.71: *ambitio et luxuria et impotentia scaenam desiderant.* On impotence as a possible topic of ridicule in the mimes see McKeown 1979, 79 and 83, n. 43.

34 *Sat.* 132.2: *et me iubet catomizari.* Cunningham 1971, 104 cites as a parallel Herodas, 3.3: τοῦτον κατ' ὤμου δεῖρον, but he accepts Ernout's emendation, *catomidiari.*

35 On the literary tradition of one's address to one's penis see G. Salanitro, "Quid hoc novi est? 19 sgg.", *Helikon* 11–12 (1971–72), 448, n. 1.

(132.13), with characters from tragedy (132.13), or with people with damaged limbs (132.14), and the anomalies of the situations compared (on the one hand, Ulysses' heart, a tragic character's eyes, a person's feet, hands, eyes, and legs; on the other, Encolpius' penis) render this comparison risible and functional on the dramatic level of farce. The theatrical effect of Encolpius' soliloquy is reinforced by a slight pause (*mox* . . . *diutius*, 132.13) during which he rubs his forehead for a long while (132.13), a visual sign that on second thoughts a counter-argument is going to refute earlier, unfair judgements and premature conclusions.

The famous elegiacs at 132.15 have to be understood within this farcical context of an impotent's musings. It is true that the lost beginning and end of the novel make it impossible to know the precise circumstances which the author has created for his hero's narration; whatever direct address, however, Encolpius makes to severe Roman conservatives (132.15.1) accounts only for Encolpius' (and not for Petronius') beliefs;[36] Encolpius seeks to justify his seemingly indecent behaviour like an actor who abruptly breaks the dramatic fiction and asks for his audience's proper understanding or sympathy.[37] Once Encolpius' address is put in its proper theatrical context, claims that Petronius is in this unique instance speaking to his audience *in propria persona* are crucially weakened.

Encolpius' *apologia* for speaking to his penis has been used not only to claim identification between the narrator and the author, who thus would be able to explain away the gross amount of sexuality in his novel and profess to be a supporter of Epicurean theories both in his life and in his works,[38] but also as an additional topical link between this novel and the indecent theatre of the mimes. No extant Latin

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[36] See Beck 1973, 51. Cf., also, Zeitlin 1971, 676. For the opposite view see Coccia, "*Novae simplicitatis opus* (Petronio 132.15.2)", in *Studi di poesia latina in onore di Antonio Traglia* II, ed. G. d' Anna et al. (Roma: 1979) 790–8 who supports the theory of the complete identification of Petronius with Encolpius when the latter delivers his *apologia*. The bibliography on 132.15 is enormous. Among others see detailed discussions in Beck 1973, 51–4; A. Barbieri, *Poetica Petroniana. Satyricon 132.15* (Roma: 1983) 9 ff. with bibliography.

[37] In Plautus' *Amph.* 486–95, Mercury breaks the dramatic fiction and explains how Alcumena's alleged unfaithfulness to Amphitruo will be justified and excused by her husband and the members of the audience.

[38] See, for example, V. Gigante, "Stile nuovo ed etica anticonvezionale in Petronio", *Vichiana* 9 (1980), 72 who claims that only by accepting 132.15 as a genuine Petronian speech (or, at least, by identifying Encolpius with Petronius), can one argue that the author has moralistic intentions for his novel.

mimic texts survive to prove that the mimic obscenities, which were supposed to have shocked and, no doubt, amused so many generations from the time of Cato until the Christian era, were actually performed on stage rather than simulated. It is generally accepted, however, that the theatre of the mimes presented, if not female nudity or sexual intercourse on stage, lascivious gestures and vulgar sexual speech in the form of either puns or explicitly crude expressions. What Encolpius basically argues here is that it is entirely human to deal with sexual matters in the direct manner which, perhaps, mimic performances had chosen for their presentation of such themes. If we view the *Satyrica* within the literary tradition of sexual buffoonery, then the theatre of the mimes is the nearest genre which can claim that it influenced Petronius' novel in its portrayal of sexual topics.

The case for a strong influence, however, of mimic sexual elements on Encolpius' erotic adventures weakens considerably if one considers both the sophistication of Petronius' novel, which renders sexual incidents as elaborately contrived amusement destined to entertain only an intellectual coterie, and the peculiar way in which the sexual element is presented in Petronius: the more 'pornographic' an action is, the less explicitly it is described by the narrator. Thus it is not entirely true that the narrator of this novel *quodque facit populus, candida lingua refert* 'reports in unambiguous language whatever ordinary people do.' (132.15.4).[39] A plethora of sexual euphemisms, metaphors, irrelevant images,[40] and a highly rhetorical tone create an impression of bookishness around the obscene act itself and present it in a grotesque mode which approaches the comically bizarre manner in which the mimic theatre must have presented sexual situations. A proper evaluation of the novel's dense literary texture renders it anything else but pornography, but, on the other hand, it does not offer firm grounds for arguing that Epicurean theories are put forward as a design for living. The risible context of this *apologia* undermines any serious intentions one may have wished to apply to either the narrator or the author.

Encolpius goes to a temple, where Priapus may have been worshipped (133.4: *intravit delubrum*), and tries to placate the comic

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[39] For a skilful definition of sexual realism in Petronius see Gill 1973, 183–5.

[40] See *gladium* (9.5); *pugnasti* (9.9); *vasculo tam rudi* (24.7); *facimus* (87.9); *instrumenta* (130.4); *leporem* (131.7); *floris extincti* (140.1), etc.; cf. Rosenblüth 1909, 53.

equivalent of the angry Poseidon.[41] His solemn prayer to the god is interrupted by the entrance of Proselenos (133.4) who was perhaps looking for the person who had unleashed the wrath of gods against her (134.2). The old woman had been thrown out of Circe's house earlier on (132.5), because she had failed to cure Encolpius' impotence and, thus, satisfy her mistress' sexual desires. The pathetically dishevelled appearance of her second entrance (133.4: *anus laceratis crinibus nigraque veste deformis*) aims at portraying her as a mimic hag,[42] who would have evoked laughter in a theatrical audience (cf. the same impression made by the portrayal of the old lady involved in the brawl at the inn, 95.8, or by the description of Encolpius' drunken landlady, 79.6).

The plot of mimic witchcraft at Croton passes into another stage now that the reputation of Proselenos as a witch is disputed (134.2); consequently, another witch is employed to come to the rescue of Encolpius' virility. The setting is the interior of a room (134.3) which belongs to Priapus' priestess, Oenothea (134.7). It must be visualized as a chaotic and untidy place which falls apart (135.3–4; 136.1), and its owner as an extremely old hag: Encolpius says that the ancient titbits of the pig's cheek she had stored to eat (*sincipitis vetustissima particula*, 135.4), are as old as her birthday (*coaequale natalium suorum*, 136.1). Her customary habit, whenever she visits her friend, is to have at least three drinks with her (136.11). Oenothea's literary character is believed to be 'composed of two quite different elements—the respectable old housewife Baucis, and a typical bibulous *lena* of comedy or elegy, with strong Priapic associations.'[43] In this composite sketch of her figure, the μαστροπὸς of the mimes, such as Γυλλὶς who features in Herodas' First Mime, should be added as a possible influential stock-character.[44]

Before Oenothea's entrance into the scene, an incident of physical violence (134.3–5) occurs as Proselenos turns her anger against the still unresisting Encolpius, who is thus beaten once more for his

[41] On Petronius' parody of similar prayers in Tibullus, Lygdamus, and the Isis-cult see O. Raith, "Unschuldsbeteuerung und Sündenbekenntnis im Gebet des Enkolp an Priap (Petr. 133.3)", *Studii Classice* 13 (1971), 109–18. On the manner in which Roman Comedy parodies formal ceremonies and solemn prayers see Cèbe 1966, 86–95.

[42] On the characteristics of this mimic figure see Headlam-Knox 1922, xxxii–xxxvi; Nicoll 1931, 93.

[43] Currie 1989, 329.

[44] On her character see Cunningham 1971, 57; Currie 1989, 328, n. 28.

impotence. Encolpius' sufferings through Proselenos' anger appear to be similar to the theatrical ordeals that Encolpius and his friends suffered at the hands of Quartilla, another priestess of Priapus (18.7–26.5).[45] This cruelty, which is obviously exaggerated by the narrator (134.4: *forsitan etiam bracchia mea caputque fregisset*; 134.5: *lacrimisque ubertim manantibus*), is not meant to shock or to show the ruthlessness of Petronius' fictional (or real) world, but is supposed to be regarded comically, especially since every violent intention fails with the immediate breaking of the cane (134.4).

The second witch-priestess, Oenothea, arrives eventually with a not-so-gentle welcome (134.7), and Proselenos informs her in brief about Encolpius' 'crime' (134.8–9). Like an expert sorceress in a farce, Oenothea makes a rather long theatrical pause to show the seriousness of the situation and the pensive mood which will allow her to make a correct prescription for the patient's cure (*his auditis Oenothea inter utrumque consedit motoque diutius capite*, 134.10). The impression she desires has been created, so she is ready now not only to make in a triumphant tone confident promises concerning Encolpius' future (*morbum sola sum quae emendare scio*, 134.10; *nisi illud tam rigidum reddidero quam cornu*, 134.11), and, indeed, to reveal the unpleasant recipe for the treatment (*rogo ut adulescentulus mecum nocte dormiat*, 134.11), but also to embark on a mimic *canticum*, full of the conventional miracles that she, as a witch, is able to perform (134.12.1–10). The ensuing first stage of the ceremonial proceedings is described in such a vivid manner that it depicts clearly the sordid and pathetic nature of Oenothea's witchcraft (135.3–5). Incongruous and vulgar details in the procedure add to the farcical element of the scene: note the enormous size of the cooking pot (135.4), the fact that there are beans in the cupboard meant for the meat (135.4), the impatience of the old woman, and her crude way of shelling the beans (135.6); cf. Oenothea's alleged experience in reading the future (137.10).

The complex literary frame of the scene inside Oenothea's hut becomes apparent in the ensuing verse-composition that the narrator improvises, for in this poem his hopeless passion for literary role-playing transforms the disastrous and collapsing surroundings of the old hag's room into the humble and decent cottage of the poor and

[45] On the similarities and differences between the Quartilla-scene and the Oenothea-scene see A. Cotrozzi, "Enotea e il fiume di pianto (Petronio 137; frg. LI Ernout)", *Materiali e Discussioni per l' analisi dei testi classici* 2 (1979), 183–5.

hospitable Callimachean Hecale.[46] The juxtaposition of Encolpius' literary imagination and the reality contributes to the buffonery of the scene. This is witnessed not only earlier through Oenothea's first words (134.7) and the ruin of her house (135.4), but also immediately after the poem through her farcical tumbling down on to the hearth, since the stool she had used to reach the cupboard for meat broke under her weight (136.1–2). A mimic Hecale is presented as an ancient, helpless, bibulous, and fat hag with a burnt elbow and a face covered totally with ashes. This slapstick accident would have been effective on the stage of a mimic play; in fact, Encolpius notes his reaction as if he were the audience of such a performance: *consurrexi equidem turbatus anumque non sine risu erexi.* 'I stood up in alarm and, laughing, helped the old woman to her feet.' (136.3). The water of the cooking-pot put out the fire, and one more scene of the second act of the witchcraft-mime at Croton ends, as usual, with the sudden exit of one of the characters, Oenothea (cf. the sudden exits in mimic plays). She goes to look for fire and will return at 136.9 but by then Encolpius will have committed another of his mimic 'crimes' against Priapus, the farcical incident of the slaying of the god's favourite goose (136.4–5).

The comic battle (*proelium*, 136.12) between three geese and Encolpius could be characterized as a farce-within-a-farce (cf. the interpolated farce of the two Syrian slaves in the overall structure of Quartilla's mime, 22.3–5), as it displays features of a slapstick performance within the hilarious framework of witchcraft which we have seen permeating the events. It is described through the narrator's literary opportunism in the tone of an epic scene,[47] similar to the

[46] Apart from the Callimachean poem, A. Perutelli, "Enotea, la capanna e il rito magico: l' intreccio dei modelli in Petron. 135–136", *Materiali e Discussioni per l' analisi dei testi classici* 17 (1986), 136–41 discusses the influence of two Ovidian passages (*Met.* 8.701 ff.; *Fasti* 2.571 ff.) and of the pseudo-Vergilian *Moretum* (92–4) as possible literary models for the description of Oenothea's hut and of the magic rites she performed. Cf., also, Currie 1989, 328–9. P. A. Rosenmeyer, "The unexpected guests: Patterns of ξενία in Callimachus' 'Victoria Berenices' and Petronius' *Satyricon*", *Classical Quarterly* 41 (1991), 403–13 argues convincingly that Callimachus' 'Victoria Berenices', in the third book of his *Aetia*, has presented Petronius with the perfect model for subversion: on his way to kill the lion of Nemea, Herakles stays with Molochus, an uncourteous and poor host who is terrorized by an invasion of mice and chases them in a manner reminiscent of epic battle-scenes. Likewise, Encolpius has similar experiences with Oenothea's hospitality and the flock of her geese.

[47] See Beck 1973, 58. Cf., also, Courtney 1991, 45 who compares the killing of the goose with the killing of the cattle of Helios (*Od.* μ 260 ff.), and Encolpius' attempt to redeem himself through the offer of money (137.4–9) to *Od.* μ 345–7.

fight between Hercules and the Stymphalian birds (136.6.1–2) or the Argonauts and the Harpies (136.6.2–4). The reality, however, is quite different: three geese who probably belonged to Oenothea, and among whom at least one was Priapus' favourite pet,[48] arrive at the door of the room in order to be fed (136.4).

The combination of the geese's aggressive nature and their hunger transforms them in Encolpius' picaresque mind into legendary carnivorous creatures ruthlessly attacking to kill. These strange enemies, divided appropriately into the cruel leader and his two milder followers (136.4: *dux ac magister saevitiae*), appear to have a specific method in their assault: all together they run towards their poor defenceless victim (Encolpius), stand round him, and attack simultaneously different parts of their victim's body: Encolpius' tunic, shoe-straps, and leg (136.4). The mimic fight continues with a counter-attack against the assailants. Encolpius decides that the situation calls for equally violent action (*oblitus itaque nugarum*, 136.5). A small table-leg confronts savage bites which turn out to be mere scratches;[49] satisfaction comes only after the dangerous leader of the hostile army is dead (136.5).

The incident of the geese contains many of the elements that constitute a mimic or comic sketch: it is brief, it has slapstick elements, for example, Encolpius' fighting posture, pretended violence, and an unexpected ending (see Oenothea's reaction at 137.1–3). Moreover, there is a fourth century B.C. Athenian vase which shows two men, perhaps cooks, wearing the common stuffed costume of comedy with a phallus, standing next to an enormous cooking pot and trying to defend themselves from the attack of two geese.[50] It is unlikely that

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[48] In his 1983 edition of this novel Müller justifiably brackets the word *sacri* at 136.4, because Encolpius finds out from Oenothea that Priapus was particularly fond of them only later at 137.1–2. If, however, one accepts Beck's theory that Encolpius' narration is that of an omniscient commentator who recounts and reshapes for entertainment his past experiences, then the deletion is not necessary. On the other hand, this Petronian passage is the only piece of evidence we have to show that geese were sacred animals dedicated to Priapus. Moreover, one could challenge even this assumption, since Oenothea says merely that the slaughtered goose was Priapus' darling, not that it was dedicated to him: see T.W. Richardson, "The Sacred Geese of Priapus? (*Satyricon* 136.4f.)", *Museum Helveticum* 37 (1980), 103.

[49] See 136.7 'not a deep wound on the foot' (*vulnusque cruris haud altum*) and compare both the kind of weapons used in other mimic battles earlier on in the novel (at the inn, 95.5–9, and on the deck of Lichas' ship, 108.8–9), and the mimic wounds in Eumolpus' eyebrow, 98.7. In Pl., *Trucul.* 627–9, Stratophanes, the soldier, threatens Cyamus, the slave, with his sword, and the slave considers of fighting back with a spit.

[50] See Bieber 1961, 48, fig. 203.

this picture represents an actual scene from comedy, because it would have been rather hazardous to put real geese on stage and expect that they would behave according to the script. Nevertheless, even if this scene perhaps shows how the vase-painter imagined an attack of geese described in a comic monologue (or dialogue), or performed with actors in costume, it is good evidence to suggest that such an incident was likely to have been included, because of its slapstick possibilities, in an Old Comedy plot. Such a slapstick scene was, I believe, the intention that Petronius had in his mind when he was composing this brief incident.

Oenothea's reaction when she found the favourite pet of Priapus murdered and the murderer praising himself for the deed (136.12) must be imagined as an extreme manifestation of melodramatic feelings (*magnum acremque clamorem sustulit*, 136.13; *quaerebam quid excanduisset*, 136.14; *illa complosis manibus*, 137.1; *noli clamare*, 137.4; *anserisque fatum complorat*, 137.5) which confuse (136.14), embarrass (137.4) and amaze (137.5) Encolpius. The picture becomes more ridiculous when Proselenos arrives, inquires into the death of the goose, and weeps even louder than Oenothea (137.5). This false grief, an equivalent of Quartilla's theatrical tears, must have lasted for quite a while, for Encolpius states not only his disgust, but also his boredom at the mourning of the old women (137.6). The point of the witches' exaggerated sorrow is, of course, not their pious fidelity to the worship of Priapus, but their hypocrisy (137.7; 137.12) and the intense contrast with their future eagerness to accept immediately Encolpius' money as compensation, and to forget gladly the whole episode (137.7–8). Just as Quartilla's mimic grief was turned abruptly into hysterical mimic laughter once she heard that Encolpius, Ascyltus and Giton were ready to participate in her religious orgy (18.2–19.1), so Oenothea's loud reproaches become apologetic reassurances that Proselenos' and her own angry reactions were due to their personal concern for Encolpius' future and were not expressed for either the god's or their own sake (137.7).

Performances of obscene ceremonials (138.1–2), sex and violence in the attempt of two lecherous, drunken, old women to chase and assault an impotent young man (138.3–4; cf. 137.13), an abrupt ending when the plot could develop no further, are motifs which would have amused an audience in a conventional mimic performance of a farce with Encolpius' Crotonian adventures as its theme; at this point of the Petronian narrative, they signify that the sketch of mimic

witchcraft employed unsuccessfully to restore the hero's virility has reached its end.

III. *Pygesiaca sacra: Sat. 140.1–11*

The Philomela-episode (*Sat.* 140.1–11) is one of the less commented scenes of the *Satyrica.*[51] Petronius sets forth the story of a 'socially and morally irreproachable matron' (*matrona inter primas honesta*, 140.1) who entrusts her children to Eumolpus' wisdom and benevolence (*prudentiae bonitatique*, 140.2)[52] with the hidden motive of gaining some of his wealth. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that the anecdote of the matron Philomela was composed by Petronius as a narrative equivalent of a theatrical farce. The theatrical nature of this anecdote will be examined in the structure, the characters, the staging, the language and the multiple levels of its description that demonstrate its theatricality.

The structure of the story, which Petronius ironically calls a 'tragedy' (140.6) is quite clear. At first, the narrator presents the preliminary pieces of information (*Sat.* 140.1–4), that is, the general plot and the persons who are going to take part in the episode, things which are necessary for the audience to know in order to understand the show that will follow (*Sat.* 140.5–11). In other words he introduces the *argumentum* and the *dramatis personae*, to use the appropriate theatrical terms, and then goes on to describe the †*pigiciaca*†

[51] The interest of scholars is focused mainly on its textual problems or on its sexual dimensions. The most controversial passage in this scene for many years now has been *Sat.* 140.5 and the attempt to define what is the exact meaning of the †*pigiciaca*† *sacra.* Sullivan 1968(a), 75, notes the 'wit of the prose' and the 'farcical nature of the scene', but is mainly concerned with the sexual point of view of the episode (239 ff.). Gill 1973, 180 ff. considers this episode as an obvious example of the literary characteristics of the sexual scenes in this novel and Slater 1990(b), 131–2, notes the role-playing of the main characters. R. Dimundo, "Il perdersi e il ritrovarsi dei percorsi narrativi. (Petronio, 140.1–11)", *Aufidus* 2 (1987), 47–62, notes the similarities of both subject-matter and verbal terms between the Philomela-episode and the two Milesian tales narrated by Eumolpus earlier on in the novel. Most of these parallels do exist; the reason, however, for their existence is not an intertextual relationship among the episodes of the novel, but rather that all three of the short stories have a common sub-literary source (Milesian tales, mime), in which farcical elements abound.

[52] The obscure content of *bonitas* is cleared up at *Sat.* 140.7. The same combination of sex and moral education occurs in Pompon., *Maccus Virgo* 71–2.

sacra, the most extraordinary incident of this *tragoedia*.[53]

At *Sat.* 116.7 we are informed that children in Croton were a sign of social isolation, since their parents were deprived of all advantages of Croton's social life, that is, dinners and shows (*non ad cenas, non ad spectacula admittitur*, 116.7). Therefore, Philomela, a legacy-huntress who in the past had used her charms to extort legacies, prostituted her children to old, rich, and childless people and by this substitution succeeded in prolonging the use of her art (*per hanc successionem artem suam perseverabat extendere*, 140.1). The reading of the woman's name is not the same in all manuscripts.[54] However, I am inclined to accept the reading *Philomela*—which all editors follow—as correct for two reasons: the connection of this particular person with children, both in mythology and in this novel, and the fact that it is Petronius' habit to subvert mythological facts and turn them into amusing distorted tales.[55] Moreover, an interesting piece of evidence for the employment of that legend on the stage is provided by Juvenal, 7.92, where it is stated that high offices were distributed by actors and pantomimes (such as Paris) who performed *fabulas salticas*, such as the Pelops or the Philomela stories (*praefectos Pelopea facit, Philomela tribunos*). In the well-known myth she was involved in the murder of Itys, her nephew, by her sister Prokne.[56] In the *Sat.* she is playing the role of a procuress, a *lena*. Apart from the obscure figure of a bawd[57] that we find in a fragment of Trabea's *fabula palliata*, *Ex inc. fab.* 1,

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[53] The word *tragoedia* which, in this scene, characterizes the unfortunate and unhappy future life of a childless *podagricus*, and comes in juxtaposition with the extremely funny sequence, occurs in the sense of a mock-tragic performance, i.e. of theatre and pretence in general, at *Sat.* 108.11, when Giton threatens to castrate himself.

[54] The ms l has *Philomena* while one scribe has written in the marginal *Philumene*, which is the Latin transliteration of the Greek word φιλουμένη, the 'loved-one', a word appropriate to a prostitute. The classical *Philomela* (= nightingale) becomes *Philomena* in mediaeval Latin. This may be an explanation for the reading of l. However, we have a *Philumena* as a character in a *fabula palliata* by Caecil. Statius, 141, and in Plautus' *Stichus*. For parallels in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum* see Collignon 1892, 385.

[55] On the ironical use of mythological names in Petronius see Sullivan 1968(a), 228; Schmeling 1969(b), 8; Priuli 1975, 54–7.

[56] See *OCD*, s.v. and W.H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexicon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie* 3.2, 2343–8. Bieber 1961, 29 and fig. 105 speaks of *Tereus*, the lost tragedy of Sophocles (see *TrGF* 4, 435–45 Radt), and gives an illustration of it, showing probably Tereus and Prokne or Philomela.

[57] Bieber 1961, 96 and fig. 349 gives comments on and an illustration of the *lena*. On the character of the mimic hag see above, n. 42.

this type occurs in two Plautine comedies and functions in a way which is similar to Philomela.[58]

Eumolpus plays the role of a victim of gout and weak loins (*podagricus lumborumque solutorum*, 140.6) and the whole perverse joke that follows is based on that premise. The word *podagricus* occurs twice more in the novel (*Sat.* 64.3 and 132.14; cf. 96.4), in its literary sense.[59] In Eumolpus' case, however, it is clearly a device (*et si non servasset integram simulationem, periclitabatur totam paene tragoediam evertere*, 140.6), similar to the ones suggested to him by Encolpius, Giton, and Corax on their way to Croton (117.9–10).

Encolpius and Corax are still pretending to be the slaves of the rich *dominus* (117.6), that is, *servi*, one of the most famous types in theatre; as far as Philomela's children are concerned, both Plautus in some of his plays, and Choricius in his description of mime-characters affirm the existence of children in the cast of theatrical performances.[60]

So far we have in the cast a *lena*, a *podagricus*, and two *servi*. The element of their acting, their role-playing is quite clear. The sense of *simulatio* is attributed both to Eumolpus (140.6) and to Philomela (140.4): she pretends religiosity and goes to the temple to pray for the fulfillment of her desires; he pretends to suffer from gout—a device that makes his complicated sexual teaching even funnier. Both Philomela's children are well-taught: the response of the *speciosissima filia* to Eumolpus' invitation is characterized as an *artificium* (140.8), i.e. not simply an art but an expertise, a profession, a craft.[61] Simi-

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[58] In the *Asinaria*, Cleareta, the *lena*, will not allow her daughter Philaenium, the *meretrix*, to spend a whole year with Argyrippus, the *adulescens*, unless he brings her a certain amount of money. In the *Cistellaria*, if the *lena* did not prostitute her daughter, Gymnasium, her household would perish by mournful hunger.

[59] The key for the assumption of this particular role by Eumolpus lies, I think, in the fact that 'gout was assumed to be a consequence of wealth; cf. Juv., 13.96 ff.' [so Smith 1975, ad 64.3]; note, though, that Eumolpus adopts the role of a character we find in a mime by D. Laberius, *Aquae Caldae* 5.

[60] On the role of slaves in Roman Comedy see Duckworth 1994, 249–53; C. Stace, "The slaves of Plautus", *Greece & Rome* 15 (1968), 64–77; in the mimes, see Sen., *Ep. Mor.* 47.14; Choric., *Apol. mimorum* 26; 110. For children in Roman Comedy see H.W. Prescott, "Three puer scenes in Plautus and the distribution of roles", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 21 (1910), 31–50; "Silent Roles in Roman Comedy', *Classical Philology* 31 (1936), 103, 110–11 and n. 15; in the mimes see Choric., 16; 110. Bieber 1961, 251 and fig. 836 gives additional pictorial evidence for the existence of children in a mime-cast.

[61] For parallels see *Sat.* 56.1; Sen., *Ep.* 15.7; Cic., *De Orat.* 1.130.

larly, when Encolpius attempts to approach sexually the *frater ephebus*, he finds him a *doctissimus puer* (140.11).[62]

The staging of the scene is fairly simple. The place is a bedroom, Eumolpus' *cubiculum* (140.4), in which Philomela left her children to the wholesome instructions (*salubribus praeceptis*, 140.2) of a sick old man. The scenery consists of one bed (140.7), the floor (*pavimentum*) of the room (140.7), and of a *clostellum* (140.11). The narrator is working in a reductive way. As in the early mime-performances, in which the background curtain (*siparium*) was mainly the only prop on stage[63] and the rest depended on the audience's imagination, so here we have not a complete description of the decoration of the rich Eumolpus' *cubiculum* but the reference only to what is needed for the †*pigiciaca*† *sacra* and Encolpius' sexual failure: a bed[64] and a key-hole.[65]

The show witnessed by the boy itself is the operation of 'a mechanism for sexual intercourse' and 'is depicted as an aesthetic spectacle, a source of admiration and amusement both to Philomela's admiring son and to the participants themselves.'[66] The puzzling

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[62] On the word *doctus* in the same meaning of a person taught by practice, an expert cf. *Sat.* 74.5; 84.5.

[63] See Nicoll 1931, 105–9; Beare 1964, 154 and 267–74; Wiemken 1972, 199–202.

[64] For the existence of actual beds on stage, when necessary in the mime-performances (especially, the adultery-mimes), see John Chrysostom 6.55B (= Migne, *PG* 56.543).

[65] Baldwin, "*Pigiciaca sacra.* A fundamental problem in Petronius?", *Maia* 29–30 (1977–78), 120, observing that '*clostellum* (presumably for *claustellum*) seems unique to this passage', notes that there is an incongruity in the text: 'However in some way not explained in the narrative, the boy is got out of the bedroom, for when Encolpius attempts him, he is watching his sister in action *per clostellum*, which appears to mean key-hole.' He offers three possible explanations to solve it: 'either the narrative of Petronius is a shade careless, or there is something missing from the text, or *clostellum* does not mean key-hole.' Indeed, there is something peculiar in the function of this unique word in the passage. The *OLD* interprets it as 'key-hole', referring only to this Petronian passage. The *ThLL* renders it as '*instrumentum claudendi*', which does not make very good sense in the context. In the Μοιχεύτρια-mime the *siparium* represents a door (43) (πορευθεὶς τῇ πλατίᾳ θύρᾳ). This could be the case here, as well: the boy is looking through a gap in the curtain. I believe, however, that none of Baldwin's suggestions is correct. The *clostellum* is most probably a 'key-hole' through which the boy admires the 'mechanical movements of his sister' (140.11). This is not the first time that the peeping-through-a-hole motif occurs in the novel (cf. 26.4, 96.1 and, possibly, 11.2; see Sullivan 1968(a), 244 and n. 3). There is no reason at all for us to search for the exact moment in time when the *puer* and Encolpius left the room. Baldwin's question is false because we do not need a logical explanation but we must just accept the fact that they have moved away from the *lectum Eumolpi*.

[66] Gill 1973, 181. Mimic performances often enacted sexual intercourse on stage, in extreme cases quite realistically; see Nicoll 1931, 123.

†*pigiciaca*† *sacra* and its meaning in the passage are a topic of dispute by scholars.[67] The clue which leads to a most probable solution for the corrupt †*pigiciaca*† is the πυγησιακὰ which a scribe wrote in ancient Greek in the margin of the manuscript. The scribe must have been simply transliterating a fictitious word which Petronius had written in Latin. There are many more Graecisms that Petronius uses in his novel (*topanta*, 37.4; *sophos*, 40.1; *laecasin*, 42.2; *madeia perimadeia*, 52.9; *deuro de*, 58.7) and similarly at 140.5 he needs the Greek ritual word to provide his mock-ceremony with the ridiculous authority of a pseudo-religious atmosphere. Therefore, the best reading is the one adopted by Ernout in the Budé edition (Paris: 1962): *pygesiaca sacra* = a sacred ceremony dedicated to πυγή. In spite of Eumolpus' homosexual preferences (85–87; 94.1–2) it is not so important and crucial to decide whether he and the *puella* had vaginal or anal intercourse. More important for the audience is to understand that 'the whole scene is essentially a game, played by the fictional characters with their bodies and by the author with his language.'[68]

Two phrases in the text must not escape the audience's attention: *veluti oscillatione ludebat* (140.9) and *sororis suae automata* (140.11). Regarding the former, one can note that the conception of having sex as a game is found again at *Sat.* 11.2 and 127.10 (cf. Pompon., *Adel.* 1; Sen., *Contr.* 1.2.22; Catul. 61.204). Eumolpus' intercourse is just like a swing. He and the girl are sitting on the swing doing nothing while Corax (another 'speaking name' in the Plautine manner which Petronius introduces into his novel)[69] is moving the swing to and fro and creates the actual intercourse. The second phrase is more significant for the theatricality of the scene. The best interpretation of

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67 For a brief summary of the emendations suggested see Gill 1973, 181, n. 29, and Baldwin 1977–8, 119–21. Müller³ prints Bücheler's emendation, *Aphrodisiaca sacra.*

68 Gill 1973, 182.

69 The most recent discussion on the function of the name 'Corax' is M. Labate, "Di nuovo sulla poetica dei nomi in Petronio: Corax "il delatore"?", *Materiali e Discussioni per l' analisi dei testi classici* 16 (1986), 135–46. He notes that 'Corax è nome di servo plautino e, insieme ad altri nomi di derivazione comica, dimostrerebbe una relazione privilegiata fra il *Satyricon* e appunto la commedia.' (p. 138). However, since there is no evidence in the surviving novel which would demonstrate the greedy nature of Corax in the manner of a Plautine *servus*, Labate finally argues that Eumolpus' attendant has this particular name because, as the *corvus* in Ovid, *Met.* 2.536 ff., he is not going to keep his mouth shut but he will reveal the whole fallacy to the Crotonians. This view is as speculative as the previous one concerning the connection with Plautus; although there are hints of Corax's betrayal at 125.3, the legacy-hunters *exhausti liberalitatem imminuerunt* (141.1), not because Corax has spoken to them but because time passes by and there is no sign of the wealth Eumolpus

the Graecism *automata* is given by *OLD* (= automatic or puppet-like movements) differentiating it, thus, from the other instances in the novel at which the word occurs in the sense of an automatic contrivance, an automaton (see 50.1, 54.4 and cf. Juv., 4.122, Sen., *Ep.* 88.22, Mart., *Spect.* 2.2). The theatrical emphasis is much stronger if we bear in mind that the expression τὰ αὐτόματα (only in plural) is used for marionettes (Aristot., *De Generat. Animal.* 734b10; Heron, Περὶ Αὐτοματ. 1.1). This word induces us to visualize Eumolpus' intercourse in the spirit of a puppet-show. One can easily imagine the *puella* and the *senex* as the lifeless puppets while Corax is the person behind the stage who moves them.[70]

If this scene of the *Fugitive Millionaire*-mime had been performed on stage, its farcical dimensions would have depended upon the mimic actors' gestures rather than the verbal part of their role: Eumolpus, the archmime, is already lying in bed. Philomela enters on stage through the *siparium* with her children. She addresses the man: *Liberos meos tuae prudentiae bonitatique commendo. Tu solus in toto orbe terrarum es, qui praeceptis etiam salubribus instruere iuvenes quotidie potes.* (140.2) (To her children) *Relinquo vos in domo Eumolpi, ut illum loquentem audiatis.*' (140.3) Perhaps she corroborates the validity of her hypocritical intentions by adding a pseudo-moralistic argument: *Quae sola potest hereditas iuvenibus dari.* (140.3) She then exits and leaves her children into the room. Eumolpus does not hesitate to choose the young girl for his sexual lesson: *Ad pygesiaca sacra te invito.* (140.5) *Supra commendatam bonitatem, amabo, sede. Lectum, Corax, subi positisque in pavimento manibus lumbis tuis me commove.* (140.7) The young boy, not chosen by his tutor for a lesson of wisdom at that time, withdraws silently, perhaps behind the door, and watches his sister performing. The action is mainly focused on the area of the bed (140.7). Corax is lying under the bed, Eumolpus is lying on the bed, Philomela's daughter is lying on Eumolpus.[71] The audience's amusement must derive from the grotesque position of the three human bodies and the movements of the

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promised to them (141.1). The noun κόραξ signified also a military engine for grappling ships: see *LSJ*, s.v., 2.1; *OLD*, s.v. *corvus*, 5.a; *ThLL*, s.v. *corvus*, V. In his position under the bed the servant Corax is transformed into a mechanical device which moves the αὐτόματα on top of the bed. Another suggestion is put forward by Schmeling 1969(b), 6, where he notes the existence of a *lorarius* with the same name in Plautus' *Captivi* (657), without, though, stressing the point too much.

[70] On the popularity of puppet shows in Rome see Balsdon 1969, 288.

[71] The number of actors who enacted a mimic plot was regularly three. This is valid in the *pygesiaca sacra*—spectacle, as well: Eumolpus / *puella* / Corax.

actor who plays the servant. Perhaps, the weight of Eumolpus' and the girl's bodies are too heavy for him to lift and he protests with comic grimaces of pain (cf. his buffoonish reactions at 117.12). He starts moving his buttocks up and down slowly at the beginning (140.8) but he proceeds in a faster rhythm when he hears Eumolpus shouting: *Officium spissa* (140.9). At the same time Encolpius who might, or might not, have been on stage during these happenings, approaches the boy and starts flattering him in order to assault him sexually (140.11).

In a theatrical representation of this incident even the space behind the *clostellum* is included in the stage-action and forms part of the show. Eumolpus, the *puella*, and Corax are the first spectacle, the *puer* is the audience. Nevertheless, this same audience, namely the *puer* together with Encolpius, becomes the second spectacle for the audience in Nero's court and for the readers of every age thereafter. The double audience-actors structure of the scene is so clear that we could say that we have a play-within-a-play scene.[72] It is important to note that the eyes of an audience in a theatre must be focused on these two places *simultaneously* (i.e. Eumolpus—*puella*—Corax *and* Encolpius—*puer*), so that they can observe the victory of the first device and the failure of the second at the same time; the comic effect is derived precisely from this juxtaposition: Eumolpus wins again, Encolpius fails again. The best proof for Eumolpus' theatrical and sexual triumph is his laughter: *hoc semel iterumque ingenti risu, etiam suo, Eumolpus fecerat* (140.10). One has to interpret his laughter with an eye on the function of the laughter-motif in the whole of the *Sat.*: it is usually not a natural expression of joy, but either invokes fear or it is so exaggerated that it becomes clearly theatrical.

If one captures the colour that all these pieces of evidence render to the episode as a whole, in general, and to the complicated sexual contrivance, in particular, then one can see in the story nothing else but a trick, a funny show organized by the clever wit of Eumolpus, performed by himself and the *puella*, and conducted by the servant Corax. It is improbable that the scene should be considered an example of the *exclusus-amator* motif[73] or a sample of

[72] One can find actual theatrical scenes in Plautus similarly structured: Pseudolus is watching Simia deceiving Ballio (*Pseud.* 959–1016). See Slater 1985, 162–5. Cf. Gill 1973, 179–80.

[73] See Schmeling 1971, 338.

perverse imagination which casts a light on the author's psychology.[74] These interpretations miss clues that the text itself provides for its own understanding. The parody of ritual and sacred ceremonies[75] is inevitable but the ultimate purpose must be none other than fun.

IV. *Mimica mors: Sat. 140.12–141.11*

Many questions seem unanswered: what has happened to Circe? How did Encolpius respond to Chrysis' love? (139.4). How and why at this point of the narrative did Encolpius regain his virility? (140.12) It is clear, however, that, as far as Eumolpus' trick is concerned, the situation at Croton becomes more and more difficult for the false millionaire and his slaves, because the *captatores* are tired out and their generosity is shrinking (141.1). What follows is Eumolpus' will according to which his slaves, Encolpius, Giton, Corax, and possibly new ones (139.5), are manumitted, while his other heirs must cut Eumolpus' body in pieces and eat it in the presence of a crowd (141.2), if they wanted to inherit his 'wealth'.

A direct connection between theatre and the unusual content of this will seems, at first sight, unlikely.[76] The introduction of this theme in the novel should be explained by the combination of different factors. The custom of ἀνδροφαγία has behind it a long historical tradition 'which ranges from Herodotean-sophistic points of view (influenced no doubt by early 'Ionian' sources as well) to the school θέσεις

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[74] See Sullivan 1968, 238 ff.

[75] We do not really know the provenance of the ritual (if any) Petronius parodies here (*pygesiaca sacra*, 140.5). For a discussion of this topic with bibliography see Schmeling 1971, 354–6. He speculates that Eumolpus' anal copulation with the young daughter of Philomela may signify that 'the sexual acts of a young girl or a young bride are anal on the first night, the *cunnus* being reserved for Priapus under the *ius noctis primae*. Underlying Eumolpus' choice of the young girl's *culus* may be the ritual prohibition against breaking the hymen and shedding blood.' (p. 355). It is worth noting, then, that Eumolpus' improvisational ritual should be related to the theme of parody-initiation (especially, Priapic rituals) in the *Satyrica* as a whole. The most prominent example is, of course, in the episode of Quartilla (16–26.6), on which see Cosci 1980, 199–201; note, however, that the pseudo-rituals in both episodes are framed in a theatrical context of play-acting and pretence; therefore, they assume a predominantly theatrical appearance, whatever their source of inspiration for Petronius was. Parody of ceremonies was popular in the comic stage: see Cèbe 1966, 67–75; Reich 1903, 80–8.

[76] For a detailed discussion of the passages 141.1–11 see Fröhlke 1977, 85–95.

of First Century A.D. Rome.'[77] The Petronian incident may be another link in this chain. The *exempla* of ἀνδροβορία (141.9–11) are presented in the manner of a rhetorical exercise in a school, where the student has to defend the practice of cannibalism with a speech in a legal and rhetorical style containing specific arguments.[78] On the other hand, satire, too, has employed cannibalism as one of its themes (Juv., 15). Petronius may have borrowed the motif from this literary genre with which his novel has so many other elements in common. The question of the author's source of inspiration becomes more complicated due to the fragmentary and unfinished condition of the text which does not allow us to find out whether Eumolpus pretends to be dead or is actually dead; and if so, whether the actual consumption of his body takes place or not. It is impossible to conclude anything from the surviving passages. But it is in this missing part of the novel that the theatrical aspect of cannibalism, as it is presented in the *Satyrica*, is hidden.

The majority of the scholars that have dealt with the reconstruction of the final (?) lost part of the novel speaks of a pretended death in which Eumolpus' corpse is a dummy or someone else's corpse or the flesh of dead animals, while Eumolpus himself and the rest of his companions manage to escape, either with Chrysis' help or after a mimic brawl with the angry Crotonians.[79] This speculation is not at all out of the question, if one bears in mind that the *mimus* which was sketched out by the poetaster before entering Croton (117.4–10), continues to be performed, and that the false death, which could perhaps form the conclusion of the 'Fugitive-Millionaire' mime, was a favourite theme not only in the Greek romance but in the mimes as well (*mimica mors*). Moreover, Trimalchio's pretended death (78.5) and the reading of his will (71.1–4) come to mind as another instance of the macabre habit of mock-funerals such as the ones mentioned elsewhere by Tacitus and Seneca.[80]

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77 Rankin, " 'Eating people is right': Petronius 141 and a τόπος", *Hermes* 97 (1969), 384. Cf., also, Schmid 1951, 47, 49–50.

78 See Rankin 1969(b), 384; Walsh 1970, 108.

79 See Walsh 1970, 108; Corbett 1970, 109; Van Thiel 1971, 50–1; Labate 1986, 145, n. 28; G.B. Conte, "Petronius, *Sat.* 141.4", *Classical Quarterly* 37 (1987), 530 and n. 2; Slater 1990(b), 133 and n. 41.

80 See Tac., *Hist.* 4.45; Sen., *Brev. Vit.* 20.4; *Ep.* 12.8; Smith 1975, 211.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Grex agit in scaena mimum

The elegiacs of 80.9, which underline the notion of theatricality through the living stage performance of a mimic plot, have been succinctly characterized as 'an epigraph for the whole of the *Satyricon*.'[1] The analysis of this novel from the theatrical point of view has justified this assumption.

Petronius did not confine himself only to a circumstantial borrowing of types and elements of plot from the Roman farcical stage, or, indeed, to a faithful reproduction of everyday language, according to his mimic models. He also expanded the idea of theatricality in his novel to the appropriate exploitation of the actual structure of staged plays. Thus one finds in the *Satyrica* large scenes and brief incidents constructed as if they were the prose-equivalent of theatrical scripts produced before an imaginary audience. Nevertheless, it is essential to stress once more, in Sandy's words, the unlikelihood that 'Petronius' work of comic prose fiction can be reduced to a string of low-comedy 'skits', intended for performance.'[2] Nor should one argue that Petronius was re-working in a sophisticated way scenarios of mimic performances which he had himself watched or had included in his vast reading-repertoire.[3]

Before seeking a probable explanation for Petronius' frequent employment of features of the mimic theatre in his novel, it is essential that we refute the theory that from the surviving theatrical genres *only* mime influenced this author in the composition of his work which lies on the margins of literature.[4] This thesis showed that the farcical *fabula palliata*, although, by Petronius' time, nearly extinct from the actual stage-performances, had a considerable impact on specific

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[1] Slater 1990(b), 89.

[2] Sandy 1974, 341.

[3] Such an unsustained theory is implied by F.F. Abbott, "The origin of the realistic romance among the Romans", *Classical Philology* 6 (1911), 267–8.

[4] See Collignon 1892, 282–3.

aspects of the novel's narrative technique and the characterization of main and secondary figures in the plot.

Thus when the author of the *Satyrica* employs a motif or a technique of the stage, which presents him with the opportunity to create a comic effect, he does not follow the slapstick tone of *either* the popular drama, as it is represented by the Atellan sketches and Plautus' 'cloaked' plays,[5] *or* the mimic tradition of the Graeco-Roman mime, as it survives on the phlyax-vases, or in the plays of Rhinthon, Sophron, Epicharmus, Herodas, Decimus Laberius, Publilius Syrus, and innumerable other authors or even mere street-entertainers. It is rather the whole farcical tradition of comedy to which Petronius is indebted for the theatrical situations of his novel. On the other hand, Nero's Arbiter of Elegance is clearly not writing a comedy or a mime, nor is he drawing material exclusively from these genres. There are several instances in the text, in which the author's source of inspiration of a character or of a motif in the plot is not derived from a theatrical text. Yet Petronius' borrowings from elegy, epic, satire, the Greek romances, oratory, historiography, Milesian tales, and folklore are inserted in a frame of role-playing and pretence, and become elements in a sexual farce.

The *Satyrica* is not a disorderly gathering of elements from different literary genres. The originality of this literary creation lies in the sophisticated humour of its learned author, who, without deviating from the tradition of *satura* in its general sense, or spoiling the literary integrity of his formative genres, manages to intertwine these elements, and to compose an amusing series of immoral adventures enacted against the constant background of the farcical theatre. It is essential to stress that mime, or, more generally, the Roman stage, functioned as a formative genre of the *Satyrica* not only on the *Cena Trimalchionis* but also on the rest of the surviving text.

It is generally assumed that Petronius' work of comic prose-fiction was influenced, to a certain extent, by the ideal romance, although all the surviving Greek romances date later than Petronius' era, and the mere fragments of the Ninus-romance, dated perhaps *circa* 100 B.C., do not provide a substantial *corpus* for analysis and comparison with the narrative of Encolpius' adventures. It seems instructive, there-

[5] On the farcical aspects of Plautine theatre and its debt to earlier forms of popular drama in Rome see A.McN. Little, "Plautus and Popular Drama", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 49 (1938), 205–28.

fore, for the proper assessment of the role of theatre in the formation of the *Satyrica* to see briefly if the authors of Greek love-stories employed, to the same high degree as Petronius, motifs and linguistic characteristics of the stage in their description of the successive misfortunes that befell their heroic couples. A reading of the *corpus* of Greek novels, as it has come down to us in the works of Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, Achilles Tatius, Longus, and Heliodorus, shows that this happens only to some extent. In her study of the descriptive passages in the ancient novels of Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus, Bartsch provides an admirable discussion on the presentation of events in these two novels as spectacles, thus transforming their readers into theatrical audiences and their authors into playwrights.[6] One can frequently find references to, or metaphors from, the world of the stage also in the romances of Chariton and Longus.[7] But a recent evaluation of the influence of the theatrical tradition on the ideal romance suggests that it is of minor importance.[8]

Why, then, did Petronius make so much use of theatre in his novel, deriving material from both the dramatic texts and the technical aspects of a, usually mimic, performance? And why did he prefer the broader kind of theatrical entertainment to a Terentian type of more idealized and edifying plays? Gellie is, perhaps, closer to the truth, when he regards realism as the invisible link between the *Satyrica* and the farcical stage: "Petronius seeking a model of realistic story-telling, turned inevitably to the mime. His novel, apart from a few more serious interludes, can be viewed as a series of mime-situations, a succession of 'entertainments'."[9]

But was mimic realism, and indeed Petronius' realism, a naturalistic performance of everyday life? And in what sense was mimic realism the only literary precedent of Petronian realism?[10] The

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[6] See Bartsch 1989, 109–43. The topic of staged episodes in the *Aethiopica* had been already discussed at the end of the last century: see J.W.H. Walden, "Stage-terms in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 5 (1894), 1–43. Technical theatrical terminology abounds also in the romance of Achilles Tatius: see 1.10.7, 1.16.2, 2.9.3, 2.28.1, 3.20.3–4, 3.20.7, 3.21.6, 3.22.3, 4.9.3, 6.16.4, 6.16.6, 7.2.1, 7.11.1, 8.9.1, 8.10.8, 8.17.3, 8.15.4.

[7] See Charit., 1.1.12, 1.4.2, 1.4.3, 1.4.8, 3.4.1, 4.7.7, 5.3–4, 5.8.1–2, 6.3.6, 7.7.1, 7.7.3, 7.8.15; Long., 4.15.2.

[8] See B.P. Reardon, *The Form of Greek Romance* (Princeton Univ. Press: 1991) 163, n. 50.

[9] G.H. Gellie, "A comment on Petronius", *Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association* 10 (1959), 98.

[10] So Auerbach 1953, 30–1.

mistake of these scholars who consider the mime as faithful representation of low-life reality with, occasionally, elevated literary overtones, lies not in the hackneyed distinction between what the ancients thought as realistic and what a modern-day scholar thinks as realistic. I find it difficult to believe that, even in the ancient sense of realism, whatever that was, the Greek and Roman audience of a mime-performance perceived as realistic the innumerable blows that the *stupidus* received from the *archimimus*, the false death and resurrection of a character, the slapstick nature of the hiding suffered by an adulterer, the exaggerated grimacing and risible facial expressions of a *sannio*, the distorted atmosphere of pretence and role-playing in a mimic world of sex and violence; these elements create only an impression of superficial reality which, for this reason, should be defined as conventional reality presented skilfully through improvised histrionics.

Similar observations can be made on Petronius' realism. It is true that the freedmen at Trimalchio's dinner-party speak in accordance with their social status, and that the text itself provides ample references to many aspects of Roman public and private life. Everything, however, is surrounded by such an intense literary ambience that it is hazardous to assume that Encolpius' adventures were events which could realistically happen to an ordinary Roman rogue. In addition, Petronius, like the mimes, constantly undermines his picture of realism by subtly inserting in his text apparently insignificant details, metaphorical language, and comparisons with the stage, which effectively destroy the validity of any realistic epithets one may want to attribute to this novel's narrative. Following a completely different path from Gellie, Auerbach, and the other 'realistic' interpreters of the *Satyrica*, I reach the same conclusion with them, namely that realism was, indeed, Petronius' motive in exploiting in such an abundant manner the humorous effects of the farcical stage in his novel; but I conceive this realism as a theatrical, or, more specifically, a mimic one, rather than a description of everyday-life events, which was consciously faithful to reality.[11]

In the tradition of the so-called "WasteLanders", Slater is the most recent representative of the school which reads a message of despair

[11] See Gagliardi 1980, 38. Jones 1991, 118–9 argues that the result of the intense self-dramatization and pretence of the novel's characters is the lack of anything realistic behind the role-playing, and that 'if the world or life is a stage, there is nothing outside the stage, . . .'

through the lines of the *Satyrica*. He prefers to discern behind the exaggerated histrionics of the novel's characters not the eccentric desire of the author to entertain in a sophisticated way his educated audience, but the deeper meaning of the characters' desperate attempts to define themselves as humans and fill the content of their inner selves. Nero's age was an age of fear, political chaos and anarchy, not unlike the reigns of his predecessors or his successors. Zeitlin, however, believes that the lack of coherence and looseness of the novel's surviving fragments is a conscious reflexion of the anarchy of the author's era, and that the overwhelming use of the mime contributes to the overall effect of a world without order or human values.[12] This interpretation seeks to exploit modern psychoanalytical and sociological theories to explain the work of an author who shows no signs of such anxieties. It is much more reasonable to assume that Petronius shaped his vision of the contemporary world, which was influenced by the theatrical spirit of Nero's court,[13] cynically with the imagery of the theatre: *grex agit in scaena mimum*. The novel's theatrical reading, attempted in this study, has proved that there is a strong case to argue for an intense connection between the content of comic and mimic plays and the content of the Petronian narrative, and this farcical texture necessarily projects its aim of Saturnalian merriment on the Petronian text.

Gill explains the considerable amount of sexual scenes and their function in the novel as elaborate theatrical performances with the structure of an audience watching a spectacle, while Walsh uses the frequent references of the novel to the mime as part of a five-fold argument to prove that 'the *Satyricon* was written as bawdy entertainment.'[14] In support of this theory comes the nature of the mimic theatre itself as a literary, or sub-literary, form which never changed its primary purpose: the mimic laughter, in other words, popular entertainment not only for the vulgar crowd but also for men of letters was the aim of the farcical theatre in Petronius' time.[15]

The question of Petronius' deliberate predilection for farcical forms

[12] See Zeitlin 1971, 636. Anderson 1982, 65 is much more correct when he suggests that mime is used in order to undermine the genres which Petronius has so opportunistically exploited.
[13] See Sandy 1974, 341–2; Wooten 1976, 72.
[14] Walsh 1974, 185.
[15] On the mimic genre as appreciated by learned Greeks and Romans see McKeown 1979, 71–2.

of theatrical shows rather than more decent types of staged plays should be considered, I believe, in the light of the Arbiter's relationship with his predecessor in Nero's intimacy, Seneca. Seneca derived material for his plays from the sphere of mythological tragedies, combined it with elements from Stoic philosophy, and presented it in a highly rhetorical and verbose style. Petronius succeeded Seneca as the expert on cultural and aesthetic matters in Nero's court, but the difference in tone and style between the works which both of them produced is so striking that one rightly wonders whether 'the *Satyricon* as amusing farce was written as a deliberate successor to Seneca's worthy Stoic plays.'[16] Petronius' decision to write a novel which was considered a disreputable literary form *per se* makes a sharp contrast with Seneca's conventional artistic preferences. The introduction, however, of a considerable amount of farcical elements from the sub-standard mimes into his novel would make this contrast even sharper and more amusing.

The *Satyrica* is not an easy text to understand. Moreover, its fragmentary state produces more speculations on its real meaning than conclusions based on facts. A sensible scholarly approach, therefore, which takes into account the literary attributes of the popular theatrical tradition and applies them moderately to Petronius' novel, can claim to be much closer to the author's artistic intentions than the imaginative interpretations which seek in a far-fetched manner to identify this text with something more than it actually is: a sophisticated, scabrous book.

[16] Walsh 1974, 190. On Petronius' literary feud with Seneca see Sullivan, "Petronius, Seneca, and Lucan: A Neronian literary feud?", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 99 (1968), 453–67; 1985(a), 176–9.

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While I was proofreading this book, four studies on the theatre of the mime, the theatricality of Petronius' novel, and the theatricality of the Greek novels came to my attention. Under other circumstances some of the points made in these works would have been included in the main part of this book. I cite them here for the interested reader:

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